

THE JOURNAL

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Cover image: Lean hopeful into the unknown. A thank-you print from Giving Tuesday 2020, Partners in Print's first foray into nonprofit fundraising. The campaign raised enough to build a new online home for the organization: partnersinprint.org. See the article by Jenny Wilkson on page 6 of this issue.

EDITOR'S NOTES ON THE ISSUE

The Double-Edged Swords of the Printed Word

David Wertheimer

This issue of *The Journal* is emerging at what, we can hope, is the beginning of the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. For more than a year now, most of us have been socially isolating, washing our hands with alarming frequency, and seeing each other masked up in outdoor spaces or remotely via Zoom and other related internet technologies. It has been one of the most challenging times for our species since the last great pandemic in the early 20th century, and one that will shape our social, political and economic futures for some time to come.

Jenny Wilkson's article in this issue describes very specifically the impact of the pandemic on the letterpress operations at Seattle's School of Visual Concepts, and the innovative approach that she and her colleagues have taken to ensure that their work can continue to flourish, even in these most challenging times. Indeed, since the 15th century in the West, (and even earlier in Korea and China), the art and craft of printing has survived numerous wars, pandemics, and crises, documenting the nature of human experience in the world. And, thanks to Jenny and the efforts of her colleagues, it is doing so once again, today.

Although the other articles in this issue are not specific to the current pandemic and related circumstances of 2021, they underscore a common theme: Regardless of the historical challenges of the moment, printed books not only preserve essential elements of the human story for posterity's consideration, but are themselves subjective lifeboats that record and document specific components of our experience—both for better and, at times, for worse.

Sometimes, books can help to ensure the history and cultures of people and communities can be preserved for posterity. Such is the case with Edward Curtis' massive and visually stunning project, *The North American Indian*, described in this issue by Edward Curtis scholar Tim Greyhavens. The devastating genocide of Native peoples on the North American continent will, into perpetuity, remain one of the most indelible, evil manifestations of white supremacy and the irreversible damage done by concepts such as Manifest Destiny. From the pages of Edward Curtis' masterpiece the faces, images and voices of those that U.S. policy and practice destroyed will forever look back at us, a visceral reminder of the evil men (and I use that word deliberately), can do. Ironically, Curtis's work was created as a result of the investments of J. Pierpont Morgan, one of America's greatest robber barons, whose wealth came largely from creating and perpetuating the massive inequities inherent in capitalist systems, built on the backs of the working class and the poor.

Michael Taylor's article on the intriguing provenance of a copy of Virgil that traveled to India in 1798 with Richard Wellesley, the Earl of Mornington and Governor-General of Bengal, explores the ways in which classical literature and culture helped to inform the ideas, beliefs and practices of those who governed "the empire on which the sun never sets." As Taylor tells us, the lessons from

the Graeco-Roman eras inspired the imperialism that Wellesley represented, and worked to ensure that both classicism and classism came together in new ways to perpetuate the fundamental inequities that are one of the essential fuels of building and maintaining empires.

Jerry Williams describes his bibliophile origins, (once again, J. Pierpont Morgan plays a role here!), and how his interests in language, history and the New World led him to a passion for early printed texts from the Spanish colonies in the Americas. In a parallel to Michael Taylor's discussion of how the Roman Empire provided an historical precedent for British imperialism in India, Jerry Williams shares how the Spanish used similar logical arguments to justify their dominance of the New World rooted in theories of the physical and moral superiority of Europeans, and the concomitant inferiority of the Native communities they encountered. This theory and practice, well documented in print, became a tool that Jerry Williams has used in his distinguished career as a professor of history, and as a bibliophile and teacher; his wonderfully personal essay on his journey as a collector highlights the lessons one can achieve from the triad of owning, teaching from and authoring scholarly commentaries on rare books.

Tim Schmidt describes his own evolution as a collector, and how he became interested in books about American Presidents. Once again, the final author for this issue of *The Journal* describes the fascinating ways in which books about Presidents become part of history itself. Whether these books are published to boost the candidacy and campaign of an individual, or written after the fact to chronicle and document the accomplishments of a presidency, Tim shows us how the ways in which the stories are told and books are written—from those about George Washington to Lyndon Baines Johnson, and many other Presidents in between—offer the "historical" record as seen through the words of authors with very specific agendas. Their writings are intended to shape both current and future thinking about the places of their subjects in history.

In summary, this issue of *The Journal* highlights the ways in which the technology of the printed word consistently reflects both the strengths, and the weaknesses, of the human animal. Despite the efforts to claim that our words, writings and books can provide objective perspectives on their subjects, that is very rarely, if ever, the case. Books, by definition, reflect the worlds and world views of their authors, and sometimes their owners. As read by subsequent generations, books can either help to reinforce long-standing patterns of inequity and injustice, or can become the tools through which we can better understand the historical record, in the hopes of creating an ever more just world.

As we emerge from the pandemic of 2020-2021, (I write, optimistically), let us hope that the records that are written and printed about these times are instructive to the generations that will follow us, and that the books that emerge will be used to help to ensure that we have learned from our experiences, and do even a little bit better the next time we are confronted with a global crisis.

David Wertheimer, Editor, *The Journal of the Book Club of Washington*

PARTNERS IN PRINT:

A Tale of Woe & Redemption

By: Jenny Wilkson

I: Lo-fi in a High Tech City

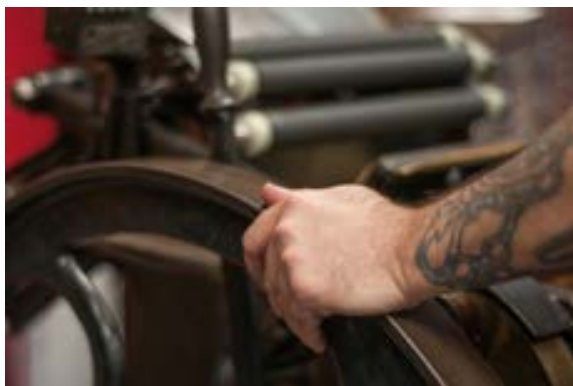
Since 2001, Seattle's School of Visual Concepts (SVC) has had a thriving letterpress program and a beloved community of printers. Then, the COVID-19 pandemic happened. As the program's founder and director, I'd like to share how the very things that helped our program weather Seattle's cultural transformation in the last 20 years also played a key role in preserving it during a pandemic.

The Book Club of Washington is a haven for people who share a passion for print as a means of communication. It's steeped in appreciation for the analog experiences of book collecting and book making. But outside of communities like this one, it's a much different story, especially in Seattle—a flashpoint in the struggle between technology and the handmade.

Tipped off by typography instructor Juliet Shen, SVC originally purchased an 1890's Chandler & Price platen press from West Coast Paper, a couple of cases of metal type, and publicly announced their intention to offer letterpress classes. It was at that point that I came into the picture and rallied the local letterpress community, who were very enthusiastic about the prospect of a publicly-accessible teaching shop. With the help of many local printers like Carl Montford, Chris Stern, and Maura Shapley, I helped SVC acquire many more presses and all of the trappings of a functional teaching shop.

SVC has always been a school for professional development, mostly in marketing, graphic design, and related fields. Why, then, did they think it was a good idea to form a letterpress shop—at a school supposedly for professional development—in

2001, when the rest of the world was abandoning print for pixels? Consider the literal and symbolic balance of placing tons of cast iron and lead on the other end of the building from a computer lab. SVC believed that balance would make for a stronger design program. They also saw



The treadle-operated Chandler & Price that started it all. Photo credit: Radford Creative

it as a decent investment. Our presses work as well as the day they were made. How well will your laptop work in 110 years?

In the meantime, SVC's neighborhood in South Lake Union saw incredible growth and cultural change in the 20-year period between the shop's founding and the present. It sprouted dozens of cranes and became an epicenter of technology companies. But instead of just surviving this cultural change, the letterpress program thrived. I attribute our resilience to three things. First, we got people connected and invested in what we were doing. Second, we became a haven for hands-on craft when it was most needed. And third, we used our craft to give back to the community in meaningful and inspiring ways.

II: Being Behind the Times is What the Times Needed

A large part of my role at SVC was community outreach. I've been hustling for years trying to make a place for letterpress printing, but in the end I found I was actually in the right place at the right time. One way hustled was by putting on community events like the Wayzgoose. Its original purpose was to show the community that letterpress printing is still alive and strong and all around us. We would invite local printers to participate in a marketplace, host an equipment swap, and invite the public into the shop to print a free keepsake.

Then, we added the Steamroller Smackdown to the Wayzgoose. The premise: we would print linoleum cuts so big, we needed to use an asphalt roller as a printing press. While there are a lot of events involving steamroller printing nowadays, the Smackdown was unique because we invited SVC's clientele of design agencies and in-house firms from all over Seattle to compete to print the best poster on a given design theme, brainstormed and judged by a local partner organization.

The first year that we did this, our Wayzgoose suddenly became a 3-ring circus—a complete spectacle. More than touring our print shop, this was the interactive part of the event that really appealed to people. It evolved into one of the highlights of the year in the Seattle design community. The design firms who competed didn't even care if they received a trophy at the end, because they were getting their hands dirty, having fun as a team, dressing up in costumes...



The 2013 Wayzgoose keepsake by Annabelle Lerner.



School of Visual Concepts original building at Aurora and Republican, Steamroller Smackdown posters hung on its railings like a giant drying rack

it was the perfect antidote to their day jobs and a way for creatives to engage meaningfully in the larger community.

Then, construction got so bad surrounding SVC's building we knew we wouldn't be able to offer the event in its usual location. Meanwhile, Vulcan Real Estate—South Lake Union's biggest landlord—had been holding an annual tradition of their own, the South Lake Union Block Party. We had always participated in the Block Party with a hands-on printing booth we called the Plein Air Printing Parlour. It was a popular part of Vulcan's event, with families lined up to print free posters using wood type and our portable proofing presses. When Vulcan reached out that year, I asked them if they'd be willing to host the Steamroller Smackdown instead. They were thrilled to take it on, and have been generous hosts for many years since.

Instead of renting our own asphalt roller, which had become increasingly tricky during the construction boom, Vulcan simply had their contractors drive one over from the next construction site over. The irony that Vulcan, responsible for the transformation of South Lake Union, helped us put on a creative event where digital designers printed analog art with construction equipment, was not lost on us.

What helped us stand out even more in our neighborhood was eventually moving to a new building, this time just a block away from the Amazon Spheres. Now, instead of being tucked away on the second floor, the letterpress shop was placed front and center in SVC's street-facing windows, its walls painted bright red—the heart of the school. To cater to our new neighbors with notoriously busy schedules, we began offering letterpress team-building events. What made them so wildly popular with Amazon, Google, Facebook, and our other tech neighbors was the lack of technology.

I knew there was something powerful about the position of our analog shop in the middle of Seattle's tech bubble, and I knew we needed someone to help us widen our shop's circle of influence, who could communicate to people outside of the design community that letterpress printing is alive, accessible, and relevant as a unique communication tool. Enter Glenn Fleishman, our first-ever Designer in Residence. Glenn is a well-known technology journalist, and in 2017, he produced a letterpress printed book entirely by hand at SVC. His book, *Not To Put Too Fine a Point On It*, is about looking backwards and forwards at the same time for connections in printing, language, and typography. Glenn sought to meld the digital and analog in a way that enhanced both of them—he used metal type as well as laser-cut and photopolymer plates. He crowdfunded his project on Kickstarter, and sold 100 copies for \$100 each in just 3 days. This project obviously touched people. It seemed like everyone he knew wanted to hold this emotional response in their hands.



A team from Amazon enjoys getting their hands dirty at SVC

III: A Return to Craft

Which brings me to the second way that SVC stayed relevant over the years: craft. We realized that in a world dominated by tech, there is a human yearning to do things by hand. This isn't a new idea, as I'm sure Book Club of WA members are aware. During the Industrial Revolution of the late 19th century, the mechanization of labor spawned an analog work movement, too—the Arts & Crafts Movement. As a reaction to the societal changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution, craftspeople like William Morris deliberately turned to pre-industrial production methods in their work.



Designer in Residence Glenn Fleishman printed his book entirely by hand at the School of Visual Concepts.

Students during the digital revolution feel a similar pull to the analog. For my entire teaching career, I've started each class asking my students why they want to learn letterpress printing. Nobody says it's to go back to the building blocks of graphic design, in order to become a stronger designer. Most of the time, they say they feel a need to get away from the computer and make something with their hands. They are in it for the craft.

The letterpress curriculum at SVC was comprehensive, beginning with a 10-week Letterpress 1 class where the computer was left out of the equation and students were forced to embrace tangible design techniques. It continued on to Letterpress 2 and 3, where students learned press maintenance and more advanced techniques from skilled printers like Amy Redmond. And, we hosted visiting artists who taught master classes, like Amos Kennedy, Jessica Spring, Brad Vetter, David Wolske, and many others. Our shop strived to be a venue for the highest expressions of the craft, both concerning handset type and the marriage of analog and digital design. We were breathing new life into this old craft, not only ensuring its survival, but perhaps also our own.

In 2019, WA Poet Laureate and then-SVC Designer in Residence Claudia Castro Luna printed *One River, a Thousand Voices*, an innovative artist's book about the environmental and human history and significance of the Columbia



Amy Redmond teaching press maintenance to advanced letterpress students. Photo credit: Radford Creative

River. Claudia drew upon the collective printing knowledge and resources of SVC's Letterpress Program to design and produce a tangible and lasting object that celebrates the Columbia River, honors the resilience of Native peoples who for millennia have lived along its banks, and is a call to consider our personal role as stewards of the natural world. The project contributes to the literary legacy of the state, and was placed in public and tribal libraries across

Washington to be enjoyed by everyone. The book was featured by Kickstarter as one of the best publishing projects of the year, and since Claudia's residency, a retail version of *One River, A Thousand Voices* has been published by Chin Music Press to benefit Columbia Riverkeeper, a nonprofit working to protect the waters and life on the Columbia and which is aligned closely to native communities.

IV: Words of Courage

It is clear that the most important thing that allowed us to stick around as long as we did was meaningful contribution: using our craft to fulfill a need, and thereby elevating the importance of contemporary letterpress printing in the community. Our longstanding relationship with Seattle Arts & Lectures (SAL) is one more example of how we do this. Like our work with the Poet Laureate, it has allowed us to move our circle of influence beyond lovers of craft, to people who are moved by the power of words—and that is pretty much everyone.

SAL's Writers in the Schools program (WITS for short), places writers in residence in public school classrooms. It's an empowering program for kids. WITS also has an outpost at Seattle Children's Hospital. Ten years ago, Sierra Nelson, a writer in residence at the hospital, approached SVC about publishing the poems from the program in poetry broadside form. WITS is a powerful program in any setting, but WITS at the hospital will make you a believer in what creative writing can do on a fundamental level. Whether they are bravely writing down the truth of their experiences from their own perspective, or using their vivid and healing imaginations to create an alternate world to inhabit, our annual collaboration with WITS allows them to be seen as more than just patients—they are published poets!

Each spring, 20 artists from SVC's letterpress community gather to be assigned a poem to print, and the resulting edition is collated into beautiful cloth-bound portfolios. The portfolios are all made by hand by the printers



Claudia Castro Luna's epic poem about the Columbia River stretched as tall as she; the book unfurls like a river to its terminus.



Letterpress artists from School of Visual Arts collate all the broadsides for Words of Courage. Photo credit: Radford Creative

under the expert guidance of edition binders Bonnie Thompson Norman and Jules Remedios Faye.

The poets, their families, WITS, Seattle Children's Hospital, and the letterpress artists who bring these words to life have a tremendous amount of pride in this collaboration. About half of the poets represented were in palliative care at Children's, and these broadsides are the physical manifestation and priceless legacy of a child's spirit.

The Children's Hospital Broadside Project, recently re-named Words of Courage, has an extraordinary regional impact: broadsides are displayed at all SAL events, travel to all of the Seattle Public Library branches, and are displayed annually in the community gallery at the Seattle Art Museum. They are a tangible reminder of the important work that Seattle Children's Hospital, SAL, and WITS facilitates. In 2018, Seattle Children's Hospital chose to present a broadside portfolio to the Dalai Lama in order to represent the depth and spirit of arts engagement that happens there. Over the years, Children's Hospital broadsides have been printed in Lushootseed, Arabic, Spanish, and Braille. Words of Courage is the most vibrant example of how we use the power of the press to help amplify the voices of our most vulnerable community members.

V. The Pandemic Strikes

Let's fast-forward to March 2020. We had just kicked off Words of Courage again. A cast of 20 eager letterpress artists gathered at SVC and awkwardly bumped elbows instead of hugging as we normally would. We had very little clue of what was to come. In anticipation of the 10-year anniversary of the project, SVC's hallways were already draped with a broadside retrospective, but

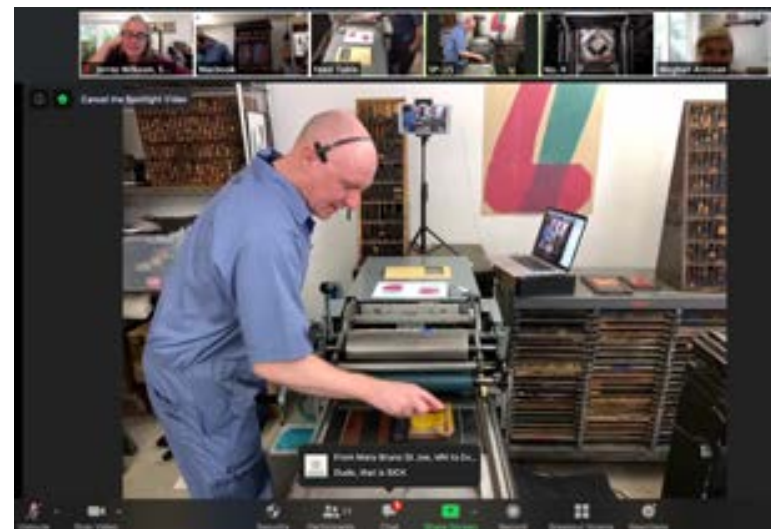
before anyone could enjoy them, Seattle locked down. SVC was forced to cancel all in-person classes. In the letterpress studio, the presses stopped. Students' metal type forms were left standing in galleys, unprinted. Words of Courage was put on pause for lack of shop access.

Eventually it became clear that we weren't going to be able to resume teaching in person for quite a while, so in May, SVC launched its first-ever Long-distance Letterpress workshop over Zoom. While it was frustrating not to be able to share space with our local students, the advent of Long-distance Letterpress opened up new possibilities for learning and community-building that we hadn't anticipated. For example, it was suddenly possible to learn from famous printers no matter where in the world they lived, watch them demonstrate live from their incredible letterpress studios, ask plenty of questions, and show & tell with other members of the global printing community. It turns out that Zoom isn't ideal for getting a novice printer hooked on the craft, but it is surprisingly great for exposing experienced printers to new tools and techniques.

Long-distance Letterpress classes require a multiple camera set-up as well as a producer (often me or Amy Redmond) who switches the participants' camera views while the instructor demonstrates and answers questions. The icing on the cake, and what sets the workshops apart, is that participants receive the demonstration prints in the mail afterwards, giving them something beautifully tangible to remember the workshop by.

VI. We Lose Our Space, But Not Our Community

As you know, COVID-19 levels only worsened over the summer. SVC sent out a student survey, asking when people thought they'd feel comfortable returning to in-person classes. The answer was, who knows when. I knew deep



A School of Visual Arts Long-distance Letterpress class with instructor David Wolske in Texas, for students from all over the globe.

down it was just a matter of time before we'd lose the space we hadn't been able to inhabit since March. South Lake Union, once so full of tech workers and construction, was now a boarded up ghost town. Our perfectly out-of-place storefront space had become a very expensive liability.

In early July, I finally received word that SVC was breaking their lease and committing to online-only classes for the foreseeable future. The shop needed to be out by the end of the month. This seemed like an impossible task. I hung up the phone, I cried, then I called fellow instructor Amy Redmond, and we cried some more. And then we got to work. That night, we masked up and met up at SVC and entered all the equipment in a spreadsheet, recording serial numbers, dimensions, everything we would need to keep track of. Laura Bentley made sure our extensive type collection was all accounted for and properly catalogued. I identified people in our SVC letterpress community who would make good temporary foster parents for our equipment. Everyone said yes. Everyone made room. The shop which was put together by the letterpress community ended up being protected by the community. Nobody would lose access to the presses.

Then, armed with the spreadsheet, I met with the owner of Security Press, who had printed the offset edition of *One River, a Thousand Voices*. Security Press agreed to store SVC's type collection for free. For most of July, we packed all the type and tools, made multiple small press moves to their foster homes, and at the end of the month, we moved everything else to Security Press in one very long day. It was devastating enough to have to say goodbye to our home at SVC, but the heartbreak was compounded by the limitations imposed upon us by the pandemic. For safety's sake, we could only afford to have a handful of our core instructors involved with the move, leaving the majority of our community without proper closure.

Before the dust even settled from the move, running on pure adrenaline, I turned around and applied for fiscal sponsorship with Shunpike, a 501(c)(3) that provides umbrella non-profit status to small arts organizations in Washington State. In the application, I described everything I thought we could still do as a decentralized printing community: Words of Courage—printed in multiple letterpress shops, meaningful publishing projects along the lines of *One River*, and new collaborations that would leverage the talents of our letterpress community for good. We didn't need a centralized teaching shop for any of those things; there was so much we could still do. I decided to call our new endeavor Partners in Print.

And, do you know what? We did it! Partners in Print (PiP for short) became an associated program of Shunpike on October 1, 2020. SVC is behind PiP 100% and has donated all of its letterpress equipment to Partners in Print—including the lovely Vandercook proofing press we named Harvey, gifted to SVC long ago by Book Club of Washington member Harvey Sadis. When it is safe to do so from a public health and financial standpoint, Partners in Print will be ready to open a turnkey letterpress teaching shop in Seattle again.

VII. PiP PiP Hooray!

Forming our new arts organization coincided with the conclusion—finally—of 2020's edition of Words of Courage. Everyone involved is thrilled that we can continue with it indefinitely, and by institutionalizing the program, it may even be able to be duplicated in other cities.

The outpouring of positive feedback we've received on Long-distance Letterpress classes proves they are worth keeping, even after the pandemic. In the year since SVC's shop closure, we've produced 22 such workshops with instructors from all over the US and Canada.

Speaking of SVC, they have done an incredible job handling their own transition to becoming a classroom-less school. It shouldn't be a surprise, but their trademark spirit of helpful encouragement and networking transferred beautifully to the virtual classroom, thanks to some truly remarkable efforts of the entire staff.



A thank-you print from Giving Tuesday 2020, Partners in Print's first foray into nonprofit fundraising. The campaign raised enough to build a new online home for the organization: partnersinprint.org.

As you can see, after all we've been through, we're well-equipped for surviving the changes brought about by the pandemic. As we look to the future, it would be wonderful if the Book Club of Washington were to partner with PiP, pool our collective expertise, and publish new works of import and impact together. BCW members are invited to visit PiP's new website at partnersinprint.org to learn more about our new organization, browse the Words of Courage archive, join our mailing list, and play an active role in sustaining our programs.

Thank you to The Book Club of Washington for inviting me to share PiP's story. I share it in solidarity with everybody who is re-envisioning their lives after the impacts of COVID-19; let's all lean hopeful into the unknown.

★★★

Jenny Wilkson has been a letterpress educator in Seattle for the last 20 years. Originally a book designer, she holds an MA in Design from UC Berkeley, and is fortunate to be one of the few of her generation to have undergone a traditional letterpress apprenticeship. She has made a career of overseeing the operations, curriculum and community outreach of the letterpress department at the School of Visual Concepts in Seattle, WA. In response to the impacts of COVID-19, she recently helped to evolve that program into Partners in Print, a new decentralized organization that collaborates, educates, and inspires, even during a pandemic. Wilkson is a member of The Book Club of Washington.

the most GIGANTIC UNDERTAKING:

Edward S. Curtis
and

The North American Indian

By: Tim Greyhavens

The story of Edward S. Curtis's monumental twenty-volume set of *The North American Indian*¹ has all the elements of a well-crafted novel: a quixotic ambition, fascinating personalities, hidden (and not-so-hidden) cultural and social histories, and soirees with some of the wealthiest and most influential people of the early 20th century. At the center of it all is Curtis, the charismatic protagonist with an unbending vision who scratched his way from a homestead on the Kitsap Peninsula to the finest ballrooms of New York. The real story is so implausible that it is difficult to sort out the facts from the fiction, and there are more than a few portrayals of it that blend a bit of both. One thing is sure, though: Curtis's books are an acclaimed masterpiece. They have been called "the most wonderful publishing enterprise ever undertaken in America"² and "the most gigantic undertaking in the making of books since the King James edition of the Bible."³ Today, each set is highly valued for its beauty, rarity, and historical significance.

Washingtonians may take a particular sense of pride in *The North American Indian* because both its author and its inception are part of our history. Curtis



Each set of *The North American Indian* is comprised of 20 book volumes and 20 accompanying portfolios of loose plates. This set is at the Seattle Public Library.



Curtis took this self-portrait at his studio in Seattle in 1898. Photo courtesy of the Curtis Legacy Foundation.

started his photography career in Seattle, and it was here that he transformed from the co-owner in a small portrait studio into one of the most famous authors and photographers in the world. The story of that transformation and what ultimately happened to Curtis has been told many times, and it would be redundant to do more than highlight key elements in this essay. What is less well known are the details of his many struggles to fund and publish the books despite what was one of the most lavish book launches in the history of the world. That story begins and, in some ways, ends with Wall Street baron J. P. Morgan and the Morgan family.

In 1906, Curtis approached Morgan, then one of the world's wealthiest men, about potential funding for a new and ambitious project. Curtis, who had never written more than some short magazine articles, proposed in a letter to Morgan to "make

a complete publication, showing pictures and including text of every phase of Indian life ... dividing the whole into twenty volumes containing fifteen hundred full-page plates, the text to treat the subject much as the pictures do, going fully into their history, life and manners, ceremony, legends and mythology."⁴ It was a preposterous idea for someone with his lack of experience, but Morgan, who was passionate about art, recognized in Curtis a similar devotion as the photographer displayed some of his beautiful prints of Native Peoples. To Curtis's surprise, Morgan told him, "I like a man who attempts the impossible," and he agreed to completely fund the fieldwork for the project. He promised he would provide \$75,000 (2021 equivalent: \$2.18 million) over the course of five years, at the rate of \$15,000 (2021 equivalent: \$436,000) annually. Nonetheless, Morgan's support was not philanthropic; he specified that in return for his funding he was to receive the first twenty-five sets of the books and 500 of Curtis's best prints from the project. He also placed several stipulations on the project that would ultimately turn Curtis's dream into an occasional nightmare. Foremost of these was the provision that none of his funding could be used to print and sell the books. Morgan also insisted that the books had to be published with the highest standards, telling Curtis to "make me the most beautiful set of books you've ever seen."⁵

Had he been less of an idealist, Curtis might have recognized the enormous drawback in Morgan's dueling conditions. Instead, he plunged ahead with relentless zeal. During his early studio work in Seattle, Curtis became a skilled engraver, and he knew exactly what it would take to print his photographs and the accompanying text to meet Morgan's standards. For the highest quality, all images had to be printed by the photogravure process, a type of intaglio printmaking that emulates the beautiful surface and wide range of tonal qualities found in platinum prints (which were then the most sumptuous photographic prints available). Each print would be hand-pulled from a specially coated



Curtis visited more than 100 Native Nations, tribes, and groups during the three decades he worked on *The North American Indian*. This map is on the cover of a guide to the volumes that was prepared for the Curtis Legacy Foundation.

copper plate, an expensive and time-consuming method that caused it to be known as "the aristocracy of photographic reproduction." After a careful search, Curtis selected John Andrew & Son of Boston to print the photogravures. The company had a long history of illustrating famous books, including those of Alfred Lord Tennyson, Louisa May Alcott, and Edgar Allan Poe. For every photogravure in the books, he planned at least two pages of text. To print these, he chose The University Press of Cambridge, MA (not to be confused with Cambridge University Press in England). Finally, he selected Henry Blackwell

Bookbinders of New York to assemble everything and enclose it in the finest covers.

At Morgan's urging, Curtis offered two qualitative editions of the books: a standard edition, printed on Dutch Van Gelder paper or Japanese vellum, and a deluxe edition, with photogravures printed on more elegant Japanese tissue. The binding covers on both the standard and the deluxe editions are Levant, a fine leather made primarily from Moroccan goat skins. The standard edition books are bound in 3/4 style, with a leather-covered spine that extends into the panel and large leather corners. The rest of the cover boards are bound in cloth. The deluxe edition books have full Levant bindings, with the entire spine and boards covered in leather. The book spines have text and line imprints with hand-embossed gold leaf, an arduous and time-consuming process that added to the publication's overall high quality and cost. The books in both editions measure 12.5" x 10" (31.8 x 25.4 cm); they vary in length from 161 numbered pages in volume 1 to 336 numbered pages in volume 10.⁶

Accompanying each volume is a separate portfolio case with folded board covers, holding an average of 36 loose photogravure plates of images that do not appear in the books. Curtis is thought to have selected these prints for their outstanding qualities, and many are striking portraits of Native leaders and important tribal members. The full plates measure approximately 22" x 18" (55.9 x 45.7 cm) with varying image sizes. Over time, these large photogravures have become the most sought-after prints from *The North American Indian* since they make beautiful, framed wall art, and dealers and speculators have broken up an unknown number of sets so they could sell the portfolio prints individually.

Curtis and Morgan agreed at the start that the number of sets would be limited to a total of 500, and each volume was to be hand-numbered on the verso of the half-title page. The limitation numbering did not differentiate between the standard and the deluxe editions. At a subscriber's request, the first volume was signed and dated by Curtis, and some were also signed by Theodore Roosevelt, who wrote the forward to the publication.

Without access to Morgan's funding for the publication of the books, Curtis had only one viable option available to pay for the high cost of printing, binding, and selling the sets: advance subscription

sales. This method had proven successful for other high-end publications in the past, most notably Audubon's *Birds of America*. However, *The North American Indian* was on an entirely different scale than earlier efforts, and the subscription prices were breathtaking. The standard edition initially was priced at \$3,000 (2021 equivalent: \$87,000) for a complete set. The deluxe edition cost \$3,850 (2021 equivalent: \$112,000). These prices severely limited the audience for potential sales, but because of Morgan's backing, Curtis expected he would have access to the elite circle of those with the means to buy whatever they want. Just as Curtis was ready to sell the first two volumes of the books, though, the Panic of 1907 set in, causing stock prices to tumble and masses of working-class people to pull their deposits from banks. Perhaps it was fitting that J. P. Morgan pulled together a group of his banking associates to implement a plan that would ultimately repair the damaged economy.

After the banks recovered, sales of *The North American Indian* slowly began to increase. By 1911, about 135 sets had been sold (including the twenty-five sets promised to Morgan as part of his initial funding). As might be expected, the list of subscribers included some of America's wealthiest people, including Alexander Van Rensselaer, Henry E. Huntington, Frederick Julliard, Cornelius Vanderbilt, and Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney. Among the subscribers in Seattle were A. J. Blethen, L. J. Colman, Samuel Hill, A. W. Leonard, and Mrs. C. D. Stimson.

While sales had picked up, only eight of the planned twenty volumes were published by 1911. Curtis knew he had badly underestimated both the timeline and the project's cost, and he anxiously went back to Morgan to plead for additional support. To Curtis's great relief, Morgan agreed to continue funding the project until its end. As was often the case with Morgan, though, the new funding came with added conditions. To help stem the project's cost overruns, Morgan established The North American Indian, Incorporated, a New York-based business entity to manage the project's expenses and receipts. The corporation offices also became the storage facility for the mounting collection of unsold books and portfolios, Curtis's negatives and prints, and all the project's research notes. While this change relieved some of the stresses on Curtis, it was still up to him to carry out the additional fundraising needed to publish the books.

By this time, Curtis had taken on a mounting personal debt to pay the costs of printing and selling the books, and he started into a repeating cycle of using Morgan's funding to pay off old bills. To make up for his losses, he launched a nationwide series of presentations about his project that packed auditoriums wherever he went, and he even created the first full-length motion picture using Native actors. Sadly, both productions cost far more to produce than the box office receipts, and Curtis began to borrow money from friends and even from Morgan himself, (in addition to the funding already provided). Then, things went from bad to worse. J. P. Morgan died unexpectedly in 1913, and Curtis feared that his project was over. Out of respect for their father, Morgan's family agreed to continue funding the project, although at a lesser level. As soon as that crisis passed, a much bigger challenge presented itself: World War I. After the U.S. entered the war, it was no longer possible for Curtis to do fieldwork on the



Portrait of Geronimo. President Theodore Roosevelt invited the great Apache leader to take part in his 1905 inaugural parade, and Curtis took this image the day before the parade. It appears in portfolio 1, plate 2.

project due to shortages of workers and fuel. Further, as personal fortunes were lost during the war years, new subscriptions for the publication plummeted. Most subscribers paid on an annual basis, which made the cash flow for the publishing end of the work uneven at best. To add to the woes, some subscribers during this period canceled their subscriptions as their family's riches faded away. Curtis was able to publish volume 11 in 1916, but it would be another six years until the next book appeared.

The 1920s were a desperate time for Curtis. Due to his obsession with the project and his long absences while working in the field, his wife Clara had recently divorced him. As part of the divorce settlement, she was awarded ownership of the Seattle studio and their home. Curtis was devastated, and he responded by moving to Los Angeles with his adult daughter Beth. He continued working on the project from there, sometimes taking Beth into the field with him. To add to his misery, his most trusted long-time assistant on the project, William Myers, left because there was no money coming in to pay his already meager wages. Curtis scrounged every dollar he could get to complete the project, even going so far as selling the copyrights to his photographs from the project to The North American Indian Corporation. Despite these many hardships, he stubbornly refused to give up. In 1930, he published the final volume of the series. In the book's introduction, he wrote, "... great is the satisfaction the writer enjoys when he can at last say to all those whose faith has been unbounded, it is finished." There was no final accounting for the total cost of the project, but in a recent analysis of Curtis's various fundraising efforts this author estimated that over the course of the project Curtis raised about \$1.8 million (approximately \$26 million in 2021 dollars) to publish the books and carry out the fieldwork.⁸

By the time the last volume was printed, *The North American Indian* and the overall plight of Native Peoples had faded from the public's interest. The final books were shipped to subscribers, and the project ended without any fanfare or public notice. Curtis, exhausted and financially ruined, went into seclusion for nearly two years. Meanwhile, the Morgan family decided they had no further financial or legal interests in the project. They sold almost everything still in the offices of The North American Indian, Incorporated, to the Charles Lauriat Bookstore Company in Boston. Among the items in the sale were 14 bound and complete sets of the books; thousands of printed but unbound pages that could be assembled into additional sets; Curtis's extensive research notes; wax cylinder recordings made in the field; the copyrights for all of Curtis's images; and an estimated 285,000 photogravures printed during the project's lifetime.⁹ The Lauriat Company paid \$1,000 for everything. Over the next 35 years, they sold the remaining bound copies of the sets and at least 24 newly bound copies they assembled from the many previously printed pages acquired from the Morgan family.

After *The North American Indian* was completed, Curtis continued working with his daughter in Los Angeles. He spent some time as a photographer and filmmaker for Cecile B. DeMille and other Hollywood directors, and he created his signature portraits for various actors and celebrities. Curtis also continued to

sell prints from *The North American Indian* project, but he never again went into the field to create photographs. In 1952, he died at his daughter's home, his work and his name mostly forgotten by modern society. It would be nearly twenty years before people again began to recognize the greatness of his career. Around 1970, Karl Kernberger, a photographer from Santa Fe, discovered that many of the Curtis assets were still stored in the Lauriat Company's basement, and he quickly assembled a consortium of private investors to buy the archive. It was this discovery that launched the rebirth of Edward Curtis's fame. By the 1980s, collectors, galleries, and museums began to buy both the books and individual prints, and prices for Curtis's work skyrocketed from there. In 2012, a complete set of *The North American Indian* in fine condition sold at auction for \$2.9 million, nearly a thousand times its original price.¹⁰

Some several myths and mysteries persist today about *The North American Indian*. The biggest myth is that Curtis was the sole author of the publication. This is a seemingly reasonable conclusion since the title page of every volume says "Written, Illustrated, and Published by Edward S. Curtis." In reality, Curtis had more than a dozen people directly working with him at any given time, including Frederick Webb Hodge as the Chief Editor; William Myers, an incredibly skilled phoneticist who transcribed many previously unwritten Native words into writing; and Adolph Muhr, the Seattle studio manager who created stunning Pictorialist prints from Curtis's negatives. Equally important, Curtis relied upon many Native Peoples in the field as negotiators, interpreters, guides, porters, and horse handlers.

Perhaps the biggest mystery surrounding *The North American Indian* is how many sets were finally published. Sales always lagged far behind the initial goal of 500 sets, and, in the early 1920s, Curtis indicated he had reduced the planned edition total to 300 sets. Other documents refer to a master list of all subscriptions that was part of the Morgan assets transferred to the Lauriat Company, but that list has not been found in any archive. Many authors of books about Curtis have written, either definitively or cautiously, that 272 sets were published. This number comes from a typewritten list produced by someone at the Lauriat Company while the Morgan assets were still at their store.¹¹ The author(s) of that list tried to account for the initial list of 500 proposed sets, with a final reckoning of 272 sets that they believe had been sold. However, recent research indicates that the Lauriat number is not an accurate total.

In 2017, this author created the Curtis Census, an on-going effort to determine the actual number of complete or partial sets of *The North American Indian* that were printed and their present locations. We are fortunate to have as associate editors Judith Hayner, former Executive Director of the Muskegon (MI) Museum of Art, and Janet Steins, former Director of the Tozzer Library at Harvard University. The census is now a project of the Curtis Legacy Foundation, a nonprofit organization founded by Curtis's great-grandson, John Graybill. While initial work on the census went smoothly, we ran into unanticipated problems that have made our goal more challenging than we had hoped. Among the issues we have encountered so far are:



Twenty-seven of the photogravures in the publication were hand-tinted or colored by scores of mostly lowly-paid women artists at the printing companies. This image is the frontispiece to volume 20.

- Missing, lax, or sometimes inaccurate recordkeeping about the original subscriptions.
- Canceled or stopped subscriptions due to deaths or financial losses.
- Duplicate edition numbering in several sets.
- Sets that were given one edition number at the start but changed to a different number in later volumes.
- Subscription sales were not placed in numerical order; some higher numbers were sold earlier in the publication cycle, and some lower numbers were sold later.
- Multiple gaps of five or more numbers where it appears that no sets were printed with the assigned numbers.
- Unnumbered sets that are not accounted for in the Lauriat list.
- Incomplete or inaccurate recordkeeping about existing sets in public collections.

While these problems have slowed our progress, we are now in the process of finalizing our conclusions. At this point, we have confirmed that at least 244 numbered sets were issued while Curtis was still in charge. We have also located another twenty-four unnumbered sets we believe were assembled by the Lauriat Company from unbound pages and prints. We do not believe these are the final totals, and we are still working to clear up some of the problems outlined above. In Washington State, we know of twelve complete or partial sets of the books in public collections, plus at least five more in private collections. The public collections include the libraries at four universities (Central Washington, Eastern Washington, the University of Washington, and Washington State);



The text pages of *The North American Indian* include histories, biographies, genealogies, vocabularies, songs, stories, and narratives about the Peoples he visited.

three public libraries, Seattle, Spokane, and Tacoma; and two major nonprofit organizations: the Washington State Historical Society and the Museum of History and Industry in Seattle. All sets are carefully stored and protected under archival conditions, and most are available only by appointment to qualified researchers. For additional information about the sets in these locations, please refer to our online census database.¹² For anyone who would like to peruse the publication in the comforts of their own home, Northwestern University publishes a free digitized version online.¹³ This version also has the advantage of being completely searchable.

It has been said that *The North American Indian* is “more famous than read,”¹⁴ and that is undoubtedly true. There are 4,956 pages of text filled with biographies, histories, genealogies, vocabularies, descriptions of ceremonies, and full musical notations of Native songs and chants.



Due to the long publishing cycle, some volumes of *The North American Indian* were bound in differently colored leather depending upon what was available. The color variances are different from set to set.

Like an encyclopedia, it is an amazingly detailed reference source that in some cases provides the only written record of a specific time in Native histories. Yet, since the first volume appeared, Curtis's beautiful photographs have been the primary topic of analyses, discussions, and, occasionally, criticism about the publication.¹⁵ It is only recently that the text pages have begun to get the scrutiny they deserve, and we are still learning from the wealth of information that Curtis and his teams collected. The Curtis Legacy Foundation is committed to providing the most accurate and knowledgeable information about Edward Curtis, *The North American Indian*, and the lives of Native People in the past and today. We encourage anyone interested in these topics to visit our website and follow us on social media.¹⁶

★★★

Notes

1. Edward S. Curtis, *The North American Indian, Being a Series of Volumes Picturing and Describing the Indians of the United States and Alaska*. Vols 1-5: Cambridge, Mass.: The University Press, 1907-1909. *The North American Indian, Being a Series of Volumes Picturing and Describing the Indians of the United States, the Dominion of Canada, and Alaska*. Vols 6-20: Norwood, Mass.: The Plimpton Press, 1911-1930. Hereafter referred to as NAI.
2. E. P. Powell, untitled review, *Unity* (Chicago), 61:22, July 30, 1908, 348.

3. “The Vanishing Race,” *New York Herald*, June 16, 1907, 1.
4. Edward Curtis memo to Morgan, January 23, 1906. Edward S. Curtis Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, The Pierpont Morgan Library.
5. This and previous quotes by Morgan may be found in Timothy Egan, *Short Nights of the Shadow Catcher*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012.
6. The tipped-in photogravures, which are found throughout the books, are not numbered.
7. NAI, vol. 20, xvii.
8. Tim Greyhavens, “Duty Bound to Finish: Edward S. Curtis and His Quest for Money to Complete *The North American Indian*.” Online at Academia.edu. https://www.academia.edu/37159756/Duty_Bound_to_Finish_Edward_S_Curtis_and_His_Quest_for_Money_to_Complete_The_North_American_Indian. Access date: February 20, 2021.
9. The most likely explanation for the large number of photogravures is that for the first 10 volumes or so Curtis ordered enough photogravures from the printers to fulfill the planned edition of 500 sets. The first ten volumes contain 1,110 photogravures, and if 500 copies of these were printed there would have been a total of 555,000 photogravures printed. Since it is known that less than 300 sets of the books were sold, it is plausible that there could have been a large stockpile of unused photogravures from the earlier volumes.
10. “Important Books, Atlases and Manuscripts: The Private Library of Kenneth Nebenzahl,” Christie’s, Sale 2622, April 10, 2012. <https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/curtis-edward-s-1868-1952-the-north-american-5546029-details.aspx>. Access Date: February 15, 2021.
11. “The Lauriat List”, Curtis Legacy Foundation website. https://4664d7c6-9fde-414f-aedc-9259fb85ca95.filesusr.com/ugd/6df1b6_38b6c7302cf24142a858392e27714077.pdf. Access Date: February 19, 2021.
12. <https://www.curtislegacyfoundation.org/curtis-census-data>. Access date: February 20, 2021.
13. <http://curtis.library.northwestern.edu/index.html>. Access date: February 20, 2021.
14. Mick Gidley, *Edward S. Curtis and the North American Indian Project in the Field*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003, 1.
15. For critiques of colonialism in Curtis's work, see Mario Andrés Caro, *The Native as Image: Art History, Nationalism, and Decolonizing Aesthetics*, PhD dissertation, University of Amsterdam, 2010 (available online at https://www.academia.edu/8180031/The_Native_as_Image_Art_History_Nationalism_and_Decolonizing_Aesthetics); Mick Gidley, “The Repeated Return of the Vanishing Indian.” In Reid, Brian Holden and John White (ed.), *American Studies, Essays in Honour of Marcus Cunliffe*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991, 189-209; and Christopher Lyman, *The Vanishing Race and Other Illusions: Photographs of Indians by Edward S. Curtis*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1982.
16. The Curtis Legacy Foundation website is <https://www.curtislegacyfoundation.org/>

Tim Greyhavens is an independent historian of photography based in Seattle. He is a board member of the Curtis Legacy Foundation and of Wilburforce Foundation, where he was Executive Director for twenty-five years. Currently, he is writing a history of photography in Washington 1850-1900. Greyhavens is a member of The Book Club of Washington.

Versed in the Ways of Power: How Classical Poetry Shaped British India

By: Michael Taylor

Richard Wellesley, the Earl of Mornington (and soon-to-be Marquess Wellesley), arrived in Calcutta, overseas headquarters of the British East India Company, to take up the position of Governor-General of Bengal. He had been accompanied on the 11,000-mile sea voyage from England by an elegant four-volume edition of the poems of Virgil in the original Latin. Published just a few years earlier in 1793, it contained commentary by the German classicist and librarian Christian Gottlob Heyne and was among the best scholarly editions of Virgil then available.



Title page of Heyne's edition of the works of Virgil, 1793

Wellington, who led British forces to victory over Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, used the Company's large private army with abandon during his time in India to defeat local rulers, eliminate pockets of French influence, and expand British control over a huge swath of territory. At the same time, India's occupiers also found more imaginative ways to solidify their power.

As a student at Eton and Oxford, Wellesley had excelled in Latin, and while at Naples on the Grand Tour, he paid a visit to Virgil's tomb, further nurturing his lifelong passion for the history and literature of ancient Greece and Rome. Though, in this regard, Wellesley's preferences as a reader were not unusual for someone of his social status and educational background at the turn of the nineteenth century, the historical interest of his copy of Virgil, which I recently acquired for the Rare Book Collection at Western Washington University, comes into clearer focus when viewed in the context of British efforts to use classical culture as part of the larger strategy to maintain control of India—a country, in 1798, of nearly 200 million people which the East India Company was audaciously attempting to govern with a mere 6,000 civil servants.

The Company's success in this colossal task relied more than anything else, of course, on military maneuvering. Wellesley, the elder brother of the future Duke of

Strange as it sounds, one of these—the study and appreciation of the Greco-Roman world—proved surprisingly useful in helping the British set the tone for their Indian administration and allocate power. Before Wellesley, the East India Company, a multinational corporation notorious for its corruption, brutality, and greed, had shown little interest in the virtues the Greeks and Romans symbolized. Profit alone mattered. In 1760, the year of Wellesley's birth, the Company did see value in commissioning four life-size marble sculptures of the men who had secured its conquest of India a few years earlier. Generals Robert Clive and Stringer Lawrence, along with Admiral George Pocock, were dressed in Roman military garb, while Admiral Charles Watson wore a toga. The statues' purpose, though, had more to do with public relations than any special sense of responsibility on the Company's part to ensure that its officials lived up to the moral standards of classical antiquity, as was expected of people in positions of power in eighteenth-century Europe. However, by the time a similar statue of Governor-General Charles Cornwallis, who enacted important administrative reforms that strengthened Britain's presence in India in the 1780s and 1790s, was erected in Calcutta in 1803, the official viewpoint had changed. By then, men like Wellesley were looking to Europe's classical past for ideas and historical precedents they believed would brighten India's future.

In some ways, Wellesley seems like the wrong figure to lead this shift in thinking. Arrogant and aloof, he was such a slave to his libido that his brother Arthur joked that he should be castrated. To a friend, he once boasted, "I will heap kingdom upon kingdom, victory upon victory, revenue upon revenue; I will accumulate glory and wealth and power, until the ambition and avarice even of my masters shall cry mercy." As one historian puts it, "No Roman proconsul had more vaulting ambitions than Richard Wellesley and no Indian Brahmin had a fiercer pride of caste." Nevertheless, Wellesley, the great-great-great-grandfather of Queen Elizabeth II, felt that it was to having let their "pride of caste" slip that the British in India owed many of their problems. Just inside the cover of each volume of his copy of Virgil is a large armorial bookplate which symbolizes the new era he, in large part, ushered in.



Bookplate of Richard Wellesley, ca. 1783-99

For the next 150 years, until the end of British rule in 1947, India was governed by gentlemen, not tradesmen. Private vices aside, their official personas projected the ideals of chivalry (Wellesley's bookplate informs the viewer that he was a knight of the Order of Saint Patrick, the Irish equivalent of the English Order of the Garter, to which he was later admitted). Additionally, unlike their business-minded predecessors, men of Wellesley's make were university educated, virtually guaranteeing a knowledge of classical history and literature and a respect for the virtues it inspired, including honor, duty, justice, honesty, courage, and self-discipline. Though the British in India often failed—horribly—to live up to these virtues, they provided many of the standards by which British failings were ultimately judged.

Historian Lawrence James points out that some eighteenth-century East India Company officials did, in fact, come from a gentlemanly background. It took a lot of money, after all, to travel to India and set oneself up for success. What Wellesley discovered were “lapsed gentlemen.” He attributed much of this to the Company's requirement that all employees spend time as a “writer” (clerk), an affront to the widely held belief that gentlemen should not involve themselves directly in business.² Wellesley was equally alarmed to learn that some Company officials had taken up an idle and dissipated lifestyle not in keeping with conceptions of integrity handed down from ancient Greece and Rome. Rather than turning Indians into Europeans, they themselves were turning into Indians. Even those who went back to England were regarded with suspicion, it being assumed they had accumulated their massive wealth through dishonest means, as in fact nearly all of them did. Some “nabobs” used their riches to acquire political power and bribe members of Parliament. In the highest ranks, too, the Company struggled with the kinds of moral shortcomings the classical virtues were supposed to keep in check. Warren Hastings, Governor-General of Bengal from 1772 to 1785, was tried for corruption beginning in 1787. Though he was acquitted seven years later after the longest trial in British history, his enemy, the great political philosopher Edmund Burke, traced the governor's perceived failings of character to his lack of a proper education and grounding in the classics. “We have every reason to regret that he did not finish his education,” Burke pronounced during Hastings's trial. “Greatly we lament that he did not go to one of the Universities ... If he had lived with us, he would have quoted the example of Cicero in his Government.”³ Instead, Hastings had lived like an Indian prince, studied Indian languages and literatures, and emulated Indian rulers' style of governing.

It should be said that classical education had its critics. Philosopher John Locke, for one, had considered knowledge of the classics necessary for gentlemen and scholars but useless for a career in commerce. However, its supporters prevailed, and Burke clearly thought less of Hastings because he had never looked to Cicero for guidance. Men like Burke sincerely believed that good government, and, by extension, human happiness, was rooted in the intellectual ideals of the classical world, ideals that were inspiring the Founding Fathers of the United States at the same time Hastings was on trial. Burke's allusion to Cicero was shorthand for saying that Hastings had rejected contemporary

Western notions of enlightened government in favor of “oriental despotism” that placed private needs over the public good.⁴

In Hastings's defense, some had argued that he adopted the style of government he did in India out of necessity. It was what Indians were used to, they claimed, and imposing European values was not only beyond the East India Company's power at the time, it would have set its power back. Still, in the minds of others, the classics were obviously not irrelevant to India. Selling spices was no longer the Company's only or even primary concern. Large political and administrative issues loomed, affecting millions of lives and millions of pounds in investments, not to mention Britain's status as a world power. The government of India, it was plain to see, did not belong in the hands of men whose proper place was the counting house. It was time for the British Establishment, with its rules of gentlemanly conduct, derived in part from the study of classical authors, to step in. In 1914, British historian James Bryce summed it up another way. Men like Hastings “had little to fear from prosecution when their term of office was over, and the opinion of their class was not shocked by offenses which would have fatally discredited an English nobleman.” Men of rank and position, on the other hand, “provided a safeguard against such misconduct as the proconsuls under the Roman Republic had been prone to commit.”⁵

This, then, forms much of the context around the copy of Virgil that Wellesley took to India. In short, the book was evidence of its owner's qualifications. However, the story does not end there, for in addition to helping colonial officials shape their personal code of conduct and demonstrate their social background, the classics also invited the British nation as a whole to draw parallels between its modern empire and those of ancient Greece and Rome. Historian Phiroze Vasunia notes that “more than any other classical poet, [Virgil] encouraged Britons to think about their own empire and the conception of a national epic.”⁶ Those thoughts took many forms. The most obvious was pride of accomplishment in having surpassed even the ancients in building an “empire on which the sun never sets” (a phrase coined, incidentally, by Lord George Macartney, governor of the Cape Colony, who entertained Wellesley on his way to India and later sent him some of his own Latin verses).⁷ Virgil, on the other hand, was also a reminder of the transience of empire, a reminder that even Rome had come and gone. Edward Gibbon's bestselling *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* heightened this awareness. By coincidence, the book was published between 1776 and 1789, the same time that the British lost most of their colonies in North America. Lord Cornwallis, whose defeat at the Battle of Yorktown in 1781 effectively ended the American Revolution, went on to serve as Governor-General of Bengal from 1786 until 1793, five years before Wellesley took up the post, and again in 1805, when Wellesley returned to England. For him and others, the necessity of learning from Rome's example (positive and negative) was all too clear.

Another important part of the backdrop to Wellesley's copy of Virgil is the revival of classical architecture. Though Indian architects had created some of the world's most beautiful buildings, the British at the turn of the nineteenth

century were remaking Calcutta, their main seat of power in India, along neoclassical lines, so much so that visitors who had been to Saint Petersburg commented on how similar the cities' buildings looked. "Even the dead dwelt in style," observes historian Piers Brendon. One British cemetery "was crowded with urns, obelisks, columns, sarcophagi, . . . onic temples . . . and pyramids, the tallest of which was modeled on the pyramid of Caius Cestius in Rome."⁸ Government House, the vast official residence of the British governors of Bengal—and later the viceroys of India—was constructed by Wellesley between 1799 and 1803. Architecturally akin to the White House in Washington, D.C. (completed in 1800), it, too, evoked the history of Greece and Rome, and for many of the same reasons. And yet Wellesley, who, like George Washington, recognized that rulers should look the part, could as easily have drawn from India's rich architectural heritage. By turning instead to the neoclassical style, he was announcing that India was "subject to new masters," that the British had come to stay, and that the social and cultural intermixing practiced by East India Company officials in the past would not be sanctioned going forward.⁹



Government House in Calcutta

The building's interior, too, affirmed that the British looked to Europe's, not India's, history for inspiration. One grand hallway was lined with busts of the Twelve Caesars, and it is said that Wellesley "would wander alone among these eminences while contemplating the governance of India, both military and political."¹⁰ Impressive as it was, the architecture of Government House also betrayed Britain's superficial understanding of India. Historian Thomas Metcalf argues that classical buildings "marked out the limits, or one might say the incomplete nature, of Britain's empire in India during the early nineteenth century." Men like Wellesley knew little about India's history, culture, laws, and

languages. "Hence, not surprisingly, British building in India inevitably and of necessity remained confined within a European, and largely classical, idiom."¹¹

To his credit, Wellesley recognized that despite the value of classical architecture in sending the message that the British were not like India's previous rulers, and of the classics in general for reminding the British themselves that they were different, the inability of the colonizers to communicate with the colonized was causing problems for both. Back when the East India Company's focus was solely on trade and plunder, language barriers were of less concern. Now that the Company had taken over the civil administration of India, the British could no longer avoid learning Indian languages. Nevertheless, when Wellesley arrived in India, the Company offered no linguistic training. To make matters worse, "writers" were typically recruited at the ridiculously young age of sixteen to eighteen. Wellesley criticized this practice in sharp terms. Mere teenagers were being sent to India before they had even completed their education at home. Then, after a commercial apprenticeship, they were packed off in their early twenties to work as government administrators in rural districts across India. Lacking knowledge of the local language, many of them could barely do their jobs, if at all, and so ended up becoming, in Wellesley's words, "abandoned to the effects of despondency and sloth," which he saw as the beginning of a downward slide. Not only was entrusting the civil service to under-educated men an injustice to the people of India, it also endangered "the principles of public integrity" and destabilized imperial power.¹² The solution was obvious. India needed a college that would prepare young British men locally for a career in the Indian civil service.

In 1800, Wellesley founded the College of Fort William in Calcutta for this purpose. Students received training in India's modern and classical languages—Hindi, Bengali, Urdu, Marathi, Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit. The college also had its own printing press and pioneered the development of type for disseminating Indian texts among students and scholars. The study of Indian languages, though, was not a concession to the Indian way of life. On the contrary, it was part of the larger effort to reinforce British dominance. Significantly, the college offered instruction in European subjects, including Greek and Latin, allowing students to make up for any deficiencies in their prior education. The provost was always a clergyman of the Church of England, and, along with teaching vocational skills necessary for the civil service, the college worked toward "forming [students'] manners, and . . . fixing their principles on the solid foundations of virtue and religion."¹³

In February 1802, a student at the College of Fort William named Jonathan Henry Lovett delivered a public disputation in Persian on the question: "An Academical Institution in India is advantageous to the Natives and to the British Nation." His prize-winning speech was later printed on the college press with an English translation. Today, the florid style makes for tough reading, but Lovett reiterated Wellesley's expectation that an Indian civil servant know local languages in order to "infuse, while he talks, a taste for liberal policy, and an admiration for the political intercourse of the most enlightened nations."¹⁴ Lovett was one of the college's best students, and though we can only speculate,

it may have been in recognition of his achievements that Wellesley gave him his personal copy of Virgil's works that same year. At any rate, the book would have been useful for Lovett's current and future studies. A handwritten note tucked inside it tells us that the governor-general donated the book to Lovett in 1802 when he stayed at Government House. This is backed up by a Latin inscription on the front flyleaf of volume one: "E dono Nobilissimi Marchionis Wellesley, 1802" ("Gift of the Most Noble Marquess Wellesley, 1802").

Lovett had arrived in Bombay in January 1797 to take up a post as writer in the East India Company. He was just seventeen years old. A member of the Irish gentry, his father, Rev. Verney Lovett, was an Anglican clergyman and chaplain to the Prince of Wales. A relative, also named Verney Lovett, had served as a soldier in India in the 1750s and later entered the House of Commons as MP for Wendover, a seat he handed over to none other than Edmund Burke in 1765. Young Jonathan had a knack for languages and soon made his way across India to the new College of Fort William, where he learned Persian, Arabic, and Hindustani. In late 1802, while immersed in linguistic study, he was chosen by Wellesley to deliver a letter to the shah of Persia intended to smooth over an incident that had taken place in Bombay the previous year. The Persian ambassador was shot and killed in a brawl between his bodyguard and attendants. When the British failed to punish the perpetrators severely enough for the Persians, they took offense. Lovett arrived at Bushire on the Persian Gulf in January 1803. A year of delay and confusion, compounded by a messy affair involving a plundered British ship, strained the inexperienced Lovett's already poor health to the breaking point. He received permission to return to Europe but never made it home.¹⁵ On June 14, 1805, Lovett died at sea off the Cape of Good Hope, aged just twenty-five. His copy of Virgil traveled on alone to Ireland and was passed down in his family for generations as a memento.

Wellesley himself returned to England the same year, sacked for having spent too much money on classical fantasies at Government House. It did not hurt his career, and he went on to serve as Foreign Secretary and Viceroy of Ireland. After his death in 1842, his library was sold. It contained more than 1,100 titles dating back to the fifteenth century. Not surprisingly, classics were extremely well represented. Wellesley collected at least eleven different editions of Virgil, including a copy of Heyne's 1793 edition to replace the one he gave to Jonathan Lovett in Calcutta.¹⁶ An 1804 engraving of Wellesley as Governor-General of Bengal merits a close look.

On a table behind him is a four-volume book that could very well be his copy of Virgil. Looking over it is a statue of Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom. Wellesley, at center, wears the insignia of the Order of Saint Patrick, which, if we could step into the picture, we would also find depicted on his bookplate inside the books behind him. Through an open doorway, two Indians look on, the only evidence of the scene's location. The portrait's subject, we learn, is a man of noble rank and classical learning who was bringing, in his view, the benefits of his social background and education to India.

After Wellesley's departure, the classics continued to serve an important function for the East India Company and later the British Raj. Even though



Marquess Wellesley as Governor-General of Bengal, 1804

Wellesley had struggled to get the Company's directors to fully support the College of Fort William, they finally embraced his ideas. In 1837, candidates for admission to East India College, the Company's training school at Haileybury on the outskirts of London, had to pass a rigorous examination in many fields of study, including Classics. Incredible as it seems today, applicants were asked to translate excerpts from Greek and Latin authors, including Virgil, and answer questions related to ancient history, geography, and philosophy. By 1855, three years before the British Crown nationalized the East India Company following the disastrous Indian Mutiny, twenty percent of the total marks that could be earned on the examination for entry into the Indian civil service fell under the subject of classics.¹⁷

What were the reasons for this? Apart from those already discussed, in the nineteenth century the classics evolved into a way for the British in India to recruit the "right sort" into the civil service. No Indians at the time knew both Greek and Latin well enough to pass a civil service examination. Nor did all but a minority of men from Britain itself. The classics were for the civil service what property and literacy requirements were for voting. In theory, anyone could meet the requirements, but in reality, few did, thus perpetuating racial and class hierarchies. Those who could ace the tests, moreover, were exactly the type of men India's British rulers wanted to recruit—men with good pedigrees and a university education. The classics were part of the required curriculum at Oxford, Cambridge, and other British universities in those days. Building them into the Indian civil service exam helped ensure that the best positions went to the social elite. Though the classics themselves are not inherently elitist, many of the societies that valued them were, and in British India, classicism and classism came together in new and disturbing ways. India and the world still live with the results.



Tom Mole, author of *The Secret Life of Books: Why They Mean More Than Words*, observes that "As well as being containers of words, [books] are things imbued with their own significance. Their importance... goes far beyond the words or images they contain."¹⁸ Few books have such a remarkable secret life as the copy of the works of Virgil that belonged to Richard Wellesley and Jonathan Lovett. And yet no book tells only one story. When, where, why, and how was it read? What functions did it serve either at the time it was created or later in its history? Did readers use the book for a purpose its author could not have foreseen? Recovering this information is seldom easy or even possible. But unless we recognize that in addition to conveying content to readers, books are also material objects that get tangled up in those readers' lives, we will never fully understand how books have shaped our world. We may also make bad decisions regarding their care and preservation. As David Pearson, a British librarian and expert on the history of book ownership, writes, "For centuries, the rationale for creating and maintaining libraries has primarily been a textual one ... Once those texts are more conveniently available online ... people will increasingly

question the value of storing books which no one wants to read, whose function is entirely replicated by readily available electronic copies. In that digital world it is the copy-specific, the provenance, the individual history of a book which will make it unique and distinguish it from the online master version of its text."¹⁹

Without doubt, full-text-searchable electronic copies of rare books are enormously useful and will only continue to advance scholarship (I depended on several of them to research this article). All the same, the copy of Heyne's 1793 edition of Virgil at the University of Michigan that Google Books chose for its "master version" contains absolutely no evidence that the British in India used such books in the way they did. The digital age, it turns out, has made us both richer and poorer. While there is no turning back, Virgil himself models a path forward. At the beginning of book seven of the *Aeneid*, just as the Trojans are arriving at their new home on the Tiber, he invokes the Muse to help him peer into the past and tell the story of the founding of Rome. In the same way, we today can call on books from long ago to remind us where they have been, what they have done, and whom they have known. When we do, we may find ourselves saying, as Virgil did: "A greater history opens before my eyes, a greater task awaits me."²⁰

Notes

1. Piers Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire, 1781-1997* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 47.
2. Lawrence James, Raj: *The Making and Unmaking of British India* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 153.
3. Quoted in Eddy Kent, *Corporate Character: Representing Imperial Power in British India, 1786-1901* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 67.
4. Anna Clark, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 86.
5. James Bryce, *The Ancient Roman Empire and the British Empire in India; The Diffusion of Roman and English Law Throughout the World: Two Historical Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1914), 27.
6. Phiroze Vasunia, *The Classics and Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 239.
7. Robert Rouiere Pearce, *Memoirs and Correspondence of the Most Noble Richard Marquess Wellesley* (London: Richard Bentley, 1846), vol. 1, 138.
8. Brendon, 51.
9. Thomas R. Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 15.
10. Krishna Dutta, *Calcutta: A Cultural and Literary History* (Oxford: Signal Books, 2003), 60.
11. Metcalf, 15.
12. *Letters of the Marquis Wellesley Respecting the College of Fort William* (London: J. Hatchard, 1812), 17-19, 29.
13. *Letters of the Marquis Wellesley*, 37.
14. *Essays by the Students of the College of Fort William in Bengal* (Calcutta: The Honorable Company's Press, 1802), 168-9.
15. Edward Ingram, *Empire-Building and Empire-Builders: Twelve Studies* (London: Routledge, 1995), 73-79.

16. *Catalog of the Library of the Late Most Noble the Marquess of Wellesley* (London: W. Nichol, 1843). After serving in India, Wellesley adopted a new bookplate bearing a motto derived from the *Aeneid*: "Super Indos protulit imperium" ("He extended the empire over the Indian.")
17. Pearce, vol. 2, 449; Vasunia, 205-6.
18. Tom Mole, *The Secret Life of Books: Why They Mean More than Words* (London: Elliott and Thompson, 2019), 4.
19. David Pearson, *Provenance Research in Book History: A Handbook* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2019), 6.
20. Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. by Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Random House, 1983), 196.

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By: Jerry M. Williams

In book collecting there is a defining, crystallizing moment or time for us all when we decide to take up the cause. Rarely do we resist sharing a story about "the one that got away" or some tale of a transformative experience.

The earliest document I received with my name in print, and of which I had temporary possession, was perhaps my first-grade report card, yet it is the public library card that I remember most fondly. That card was a passport into a world that shaped my thinking, fueled my questioning, and nurtured a seemingly insatiable appetite for knowledge. "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." Yes. Well, true. But not so fast, for I have not yet put behind me the feel of a book, the sympathetic turning of pages, the unbroken pact and connection with the printed word. Literacy is the greatest and one of the most cherished gifts of childhood; nurturing that gift helped me to make my way in the world. Packing for summer trips commenced invariably with selecting a handful of books sandwiched between layers of clothing. My favorite short story remains *Continuity of Parks* by Julio Cortázar. It centers on a character that loses himself in what turns out to be a dangerously lethal act of reading. The author expressed in precise language the abandon and visceral seduction embedded in the act of reading.

I have pondered when approximately I came to appreciate rare books and similar printed materials. A memorable inaugural encounter occurred not in undergraduate but rather graduate school, where a course requirement included a lecture on and an examination of medieval texts in Beinecke Library. The ceremonial presentation of books and the reverential opening and closing of each one was impressive. We students, novices to rare book handling, reflected with humor on the fact that "they guarded the books as if they were pure gold." That contact ushered me into a space where I felt an intimacy difficult to explain to classmates and friends, but to which I returned frequently. I resolved to improve my Latin and took a lengthy summer course on paleography. Weekend trips from New Haven to New York City included obligatory stops at the Public Library and the Hispanic Society of America. I also took full advantage of those excursions to behold the wonders of the Pierpont Morgan Library, among other bibliophile delights. I chose a graduate program Spanish Literature in order to pursue my interest in Spanish medieval literature. Along the way, I took one course—the only course—offered on the discovery and conquest literature of

America, and quickly saw my attention divided between those two subjects. Colonial Latin American Studies were just then in their relative infancy as a program, and there was increased demand for new-world incunabula, mostly from Mexico and Peru. In particular, I found intriguing the corpus or textual family of writings that characterize sixteenth century historical discourse (dispatches, accounts, diaries, letters, journals, chronicles, histories, et al); they reveal a dialog between texts and descriptive terms that are contiguous and often reference one another. Awards and fellowships introduced me to research institutions with prestigious rare book holdings, e.g., the John Carter Brown Library, which became a second home, the Newberry Library, the University of Texas at Austin.

A summer research trip to Peru was another in a series of defining circumstances. Lima was in the midst of a strike by teachers and federal workers, with support from sympathetic university students. At the National Library of Peru, staffers staged “legal” strike alerts that were free from government intervention. The government had discontinued university funding, and the Ministry of Education demanded that the University of San Marcos cease to rely on the National Library to fund its book purchases. (San Marcos was founded in May 12, 1551 with a patent that Dominican Tomás de San Martín had obtained from Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. This is a full eighty-five years before Harvard was established.) Against the backdrop of disorder and the bombing of the Ministry, government edicts to stem the presence of the Shining Path, and protests at San Marcos—where military troops had taken up positions in classrooms—I conducted hurried interviews with strike leaders. Late one morning I happen to wander into the Casona of San Marcos, then the university headquarters (now its cultural center). The earthquake damage from decades prior had not yet been repaired, and the chaos was suggestive of a combat zone. With sections of its roof exposed and sunlight pouring through broken windows whose jagged panes resembled half smiles, there in an otherwise atrabilious venue sat a mass of rare books and manuscripts, some partially covered with clear yet insufficient plastic tarp. The hour was marvelous, magical perhaps. As I saw it, Alice in Wonderland had no idea of what she had missed.

I went from table to table of that Lucullan feast for the eyes, perusing but with a sense of urgency, as if that bounty might disappear as quickly as it had materialized. It was a land of vellum, hand painted manuscripts, first editions, maps and folios subjected to improper conservation; i.e., humidity, extremes of temperature, dust, and injudicious handling. Some of the titles and authors I knew from investigations and course work; others were obscure. Latin, Greek, Spanish, French, English, Italian, Dutch, and German—all in haphazard placement. Oh, what a respite from the intermittent tear gas and the urban upheaval! I took in what I could of those piles of printed matter that spoke to our collective identity and through which we sought to understand our humanity across time.

How pure the joy, when first my hands unfold
The small, rare volume, black with tarnished gold!
— John Ferriar, *The Bibliomania, an Epistle*

A staff member approached, and our exchanges were relaxed, ultimately enough for him to tender me an offer: lunch at a side street café was the re-entrance fee exacted that permitted me to make headway with exploring the aisles of book-laden tables. Knowing from past experience the need to present a letter of introduction to gain access to the library of walled monasteries and gated convents, paying for lunch was quite a bargain.

With a sugar and caffeine energy-spiked level of curiosity, I resolved to undertake another round of scrutinizing the array before me. The Twilight Zone image of Mr. Bemis (in “Time Enough at Last”) surrounded by mounds of library books after the atomic detonation made me smile. Spectacles, shoes, clothing and hands clouded with dust and dirt, I emerged as a walking battlefield. Cell phones with cameras did not come along until 2002, so my recorder was a pen and notepaper, and I wrote hastily to list the mostly Spanish titles. Zárate, *Historia del descubrimiento y conquista ... del Perú* (1555); Ercilla y Zúñiga, *La Araucana* (1569); Benzoni, *La historia del mondo novo* (1556); Martyris ab Angleria, *De rebus oceanicis & Orbe novo* (1533); Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana* (1723); Castellanos, *Elegías de varones* (1589); Peralta Barnuevo, *Lima fundada* (1732); Staden, *Wahrhaftige historia* (1557); Acosta, *De natura novi orbis libri duo* (1588); Valdés, *Poema heroyco hispano-latino* (1687); Belveder, *Libro general de las reducciones de plata* (1597); Bermúdez de la Torre, *Triunfos del Santo Oficio peruano* (1737); Onã, *Arauco domado* (1596); Calancha y Benavides, *Coronica moralizada* (1638) et al. Little did I know that years later, using first editions in my collection, I would introduce students to some of those texts through lectures and publishing modern critical editions.

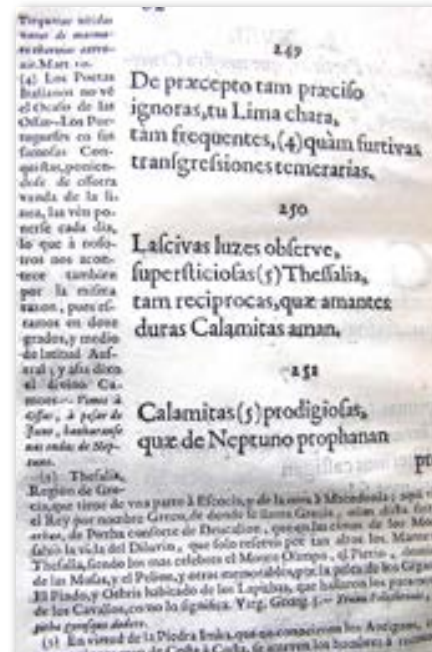
Here I digress, for chronology is no match for the strength of gratifying recall. Years after I had seen Juan de Valdés’ 1867 *Poema heroyco hispano-latino panegyrico de la fundacion, y grandezas de la muy noble, y leal ciudad de Lima* (Panegyric Hispano-Latin Heroic Poem of the founding and greatness of the very noble and loyal city of Lima) in the Casona, I was fortunate to acquire a first edition. Peruvian Jesuit Valdés (1609-1682) wrote a baroque dual language panegyric to Lima—Spain’s jewel in the crown—in which he exalted the utility and beauty of Spanish and Latin as versatile, interchangeable, superior and closer to Classical Latin than Italian. The rhymed, formulaic chronicle employs an assonant rhyme scheme that can be read in either Latin or Spanish with equal meaning. Written as functional poetry, Valdés created a didactic tool to instruct young king Carlos II (1661-1700) in Latin about the character of the transatlantic empire he had inherited at age 3 in 1665. In the absence of an imperial visit, Valdés guided the regent-governed monarch through a century of Peru’s illustrious history, highlighting its architecture, institutions and assets. On his deathbed, Valdés became deranged and tore the poem into small pieces. A nephew, Garavito, reconstructed 572 of the original 800 quatrains, leaving a 25% deficit and converting the poem into a labyrinth of meaning. Adding to the mystery was the fact that the name of the work was changed from how it appeared in dedicatory front matter. Garavito revised the title from its original to the dryly descriptive *Poema heroyco...*, which shifted emphasis away from the subject (regal Lima) to the style (Hispano-Latin poetry).



Rodrigo de Valdés' original 1687 *Poema heroyco hispano-latino panegyrico de la fundacion, y grandezas de la muy noble, y leal ciudad de Lima*



Garavito's revised and edited title page of *Poema heroyco*...



A page from *Poema heroyco*... showing marginalia and protracted Latin passages



Original 1738 edition of Pedro Peralta Barnuevo's *Passion y Triumpho de Christo*

Secondly, although it had received all required approvals, licenses and permissions in Lima, *Poema heroyco* was printed in Madrid. Perhaps that was due to the substandard quality of typefaces in Lima and second-hand printing materials imported from Spain. Conversely, a Madrid press may have been less costly and more prestigious, as printer Antonio Román had enjoyed previous commissions from other Peruvian authors. (In 1581 Antonio Ricardo [Ricciardi, a native of Turin] relocated from Mexico to Lima; he received a royal license in August 1584 and printed the first book in Lima in 1585.)

Poema heroyco is replete with marginalia and protracted Latin passages that required translation.

Initially dismissed for its baroque excesses, the poem now is understood within the “canon” to affirm colonial identity and humanistic values of seventeenth-century Peru. Serendipity at the Casona became part of an extensive research project that resulted in the creation of a seminar on Latin American colonial literature.

Among the book-strewn tables was the original 1738 edition of *Passion y Triumpho de Christo* by Peru's most accomplished Enlightenment figure, Pedro Peralta Barnuevo (1664-1743).

While he never left the confines of his native Lima, Peralta was known to the European literary and scientific community for his *oeuvre* of more than 63 published works. His output spans the decline of the Austrian dynasty under Carlos II and the last years of the first Bourbon king, Felipe II. A *criollo* (offspring of Spaniards born in the New World) savant and polyglot, he operated an Academy of Mathematics and Eloquence and reveled in the patronage of seven viceroys, yet railed constantly against the economics of publishing. Although he lionized the Spanish monarchy, Peralta also framed his works to defend “our America,” “our Creole nation” and Peru's citizenry of “Spanish Americans” in a campaign to establish a distinct intellectual and ideological separation from Spain. Peralta regarded Peru as prospering under the same relationship with Spain that Spain once enjoyed with Rome. Bourbon Spain, he argued, had inherited not only the history of Rome but also its majesty and power as head of an American empire; its colonies were the heart of the monarchy's wealth. The politics of reappraising the *criollo* of the eighteenth century as “Other,” whose putative “natural deficiency” had displaced the American Indian as a target of cultural hegemony, was engaging. In their writings *criollos* contested the pseudo-scientific theories that promoted laws of humoral pathology and the purported detrimental effects of geography and

climate in order to impugn the rational faculties (*capitis diminutio*) of new-world inhabitants.

Passion y Triumpho was one of several Peralta imprints that I reintroduced to a new readership. In that pious tome, conceived in his Academy, the sacred and the profane merged to aid his case. Recognizing that for centuries paintings, sculptures, and iconographic images had received the blessing of the Church, Peralta sought to entitle *Passion y Triumpho* as another work of religious art imbued with godliness and deserving of the approval of the Church. The religious visual stimuli encountered habitually in all avenues of life helped to frame layman Peralta's divinely inspired vision of Christ's suffering. The author's feverish pitch of personal anguish was placed on a course parallel with that of Christ. His artistic rendering aimed to arouse the imagination, facilitate contemplation, and inspire the soul through powerful revelations capable of producing or approximating a mystical experience devoid of the metaphysical. Such explains why there are so few illustrations in the text, a product of "the

Press located outside the walls of Santa Cathalina" (La Imprenta que está extra muros de Santa Cathalina) that Antonio José Gutiérrez de Cevallos operated from 1737 to 1740. The title page appears within an ornamental border; each Prayer is illustrated with an ornamental initial and contains decorative head and tailpieces.

Divided into 10 Orations or meditative Prayers that cover Christ in the Garden to his Ascension, *Passion y Triumpho* was censored by the Inquisition in August 1739 because, in an act of poetic license, Peralta had "pronounced" or attributed to Christ certain phrases as if they were His true words: "Thus God himself allows us to reflect on what He would have prayed." Ordered withdrawn from circulation donec expurgeretur, the Holy Tribunal issued a veiled threat of capital punishment, and inquisitor Ruiz de Alvarado opined: "It could be, God forbid, that the author's demise would take place where the stubborn die

miserably." Declaring the book to be a crepuscular offering in recognition of his infirmity and advanced age, Peralta countered that the censors misunderstood the work. Censorship was a sensitive issue for Peralta, for he had already endured a scrape with the Holy Tribunal in 1733 for an official account of an auto-da-fe that the viceroy commissioned him to author:

A judge needs to do just the right thing, since it is no less difficult to censure judiciously than to write perfectly. Censors think that they incur no risk, without noticing that they share the crisis of arduousness with the work, and that the judge is often a prisoner of the cause. Never have I persuaded myself that I should please everyone, which would be like thinking that talent could obtain what until now reason has been unable to do... There is no way to understand censors... My charge is to teach, and hence writing cannot be censorship.

After two years of litigation, evidence against Peralta proved inconclusive. Following his death, censors expurgated the equivocal passages from individual copies as late as 1788. Beinecke Library has one of the censored copies.

There was yet a similar fortuity. During one Spring, while consulting documents in the rare book room of Van Pelt Library at the University of Pennsylvania, a folio of manuscripts I had requested included, by error: *Relación del auto grande de la Inquisición que se celebró en la plaza grande de Lima el día 23 de diciembre del año de 1736*, (Account of the auto-da-fé celebrated in the main square of the city of Lima on the 23rd of December of the year 1736). I thought it significant, so I requested a microfilm and filed it away. On my next trip to Lima I visited the Inquisition Museum, and was surprised to see an exhibit that spotlighted the trial of Ana de Castro. The pieces started to jell in one of the torture chamber rooms, and I sought out the museum director, Dr. Fernando Ayllón Duarte, to inquire if the Museum had a copy of the Van Pelt manuscript. Working with the original for two years, I was able to pen the missing pieces of the history.

Between 1573 and 1806, thirty-four autos-da-fe were held in Lima before the Inquisition was abolished in 1813. The case of María Francisca Ana de Castro was one of most celebrated in Lima's repressive campaign against crypto-Jews. It occurred one century after the same Inquisition burned at the stake 11 out of 80 Jewish merchants of Portuguese descent, who were prosecuted over four years in a process that culminated in a 1639 trial known as the "Great Conspiracy." Castro was the last prisoner and Jew burned at the Inquisition stakes in 1736 after a ten-year imprisonment. Other charges ranged from bigamy and immorality (while married, she had a liaison with the viceroy-elect), to idolatry and heresy. In essence Castro was tried twice: as "a bad Jew as well as a bad Christian." Hers was a dramatic and corrupt affair involving torture and the complicity of inquisition officials to make a public spectacle of her. Intrigue, plots and subplots heightened the pathos of her narrative. A handwritten note in a corner of the Van Pelt manuscript indicated that although clergyman Nicolás Flores was its author, the document had been returned to inquisitor Cristóbal Sánchez Calderón. By coincidence, Calderón was the same inquisitor who condemned *Passion y Triumpho* and investigated Peralta in 1733. Flores was an



Decorative headpiece and embellished initial letter from *Passion y Triumpho de Christo*

eyewitness to the Inquisition proceedings against Castro; he mounted a vigorous defense of her, contradicting evidence introduced in her disfavor, and criticized the misconduct of Calderón. In the end Flores was prosecuted and tortured for defying the injunction of silence around her case; when the trial ended, the blanket penalty for breaking silence was excommunication. The presence of the manuscript, with its firsthand account and words spoken by Castro, established a case for her vindication. Introducing a manuscript copy in the classroom authenticated the student's learning experience of how the Inquisition operated in the colonies and was inclined to prosecute marginalized groups and poor urban women.

Those enduring hours in the Casona are a reminder that books can constitute an enticement greater than any with which Tantalus grappled. A few years passed before I returned to Lima to find the Casona under repair; the books had been relocated. There, on what seemed a stage in need of an audience of respectful and fervent admirers, I was initiated into the religion of book collecting. A defender of the faith, missionary zeal led me to take a vow to ensure safe, proper housing for the family (of texts) under my roof. Attending to the health and welfare of the seniors in the group became an absolute priority. (Bibliophiles should strive to exercise their sense of humor.) While under my care, I was to provide them a stable environment, shield them from neglect and abuse, adjust their posture so they sat upright without slouch, take them to a specialist when required, budget for their needs, warrant temperature-controlled quarters, and so forth.

The interplay between teaching and publishing selected books from private holdings afforded "show and tell" opportunities in the classroom where students were able to handle and read from first editions, and be exposed to changes in writing styles across centuries. We discussed the history of the book, printing and binding norms (one male student chuckled at seeing that lambskin indeed had another purpose), the circulation of texts, and the role of censors. Students also learned about the challenges imbedded in transcribing and producing a modern edition from the original. Topics encompassed the application of editorial norms to resolve ambiguity, printing errors, diacritics, orthographic conventions, poorly numbered pages, and marginal or footnotes. Another issue reviewed was how to treat the absence or presence of commas, colons, and semi-colons that made for convoluted run-on sentences original to complex and artificial rhetoric; how, with briefer sentences, to not impede a fluid reading of a text in an effort to render meaning intelligible. The triad of owning rare books, teaching from them, and, finally, editing them adds complexity to—yet enhances—the relationship between collector and book in that it facilitates sharing rare texts with a wider audience of readers who may find similar inspiration or affinity.

Far from being a collector in the narrow sense of the term, I also consider myself a perpetual student of books and documents I possess, and that ordinarily involves researching and translating from Latin. Two manuscripts from Valencia dated 1461 and 1499, written in both Spanish and Latin, are indicative of how I burrow into certain acquisitions. Magnifying glass in hand, paleographic guides

at elbow and Visine at the ready, it can sometimes be a slow start. Instead of adorning shelves, personal library items are a part of and a reflection of my academic and professional identity.

When I retired from university teaching four years ago, I traded the classroom for another laboratory where it was possible to spend unlimited time revisiting and ramping up my collection. Of late I am given to reflect on the disposition of incunabula and a library family of related Ibero- and Spanish-American XVIth to XVIIIth century texts, all protected and "guarded ... as if they were pure gold." Having had the position of steward, it is with excitement that I look forward to relocating private rare books where they will remain safeguarded and be of value to scholars and antiquarians who wish to consult and study them. Making that transfer a reality is part of the next palpating chapter.

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Collecting American Presidents

By: Tim Schmidt

I have always been a collector. As a youth, I collected monster trading cards, comics, and beer cans. Mom tossed my monster cards, I sold my comics, and my kid brother recycled the beer cans. I still harass my brother about the last one, but he just rightfully points out that it is pretty weird for a kid to collect beer cans. What can I say? Those were different times.

Collecting books was never on my radar as a kid, even though books and libraries were a huge part of my youth. Every Saturday, my two sisters and I would go to the Puyallup library for several hours. Both parents worked on Saturday and the library was just around the corner from the Catholic church where we went to Saturday school. The library became our daycare and the librarians our babysitters. I loved the library because I felt like I could learn about anything, while the endless stories were almost as amazing as the librarians who always had the best recommendations.

It was at Central Washington University in 1986 that I discovered books as objects. I was an English literature major and one of my professors brought to class an original first edition of something we were reading. I think it was *Madam Bovary* or *Moby Dick*, or perhaps *The Scarlet Letter*. I wish I could remember the title and the professor that thought to bring it, but I only recall being captivated by this old book and its own history beyond the words on the paper. I was hooked from that moment on.

I did not know anything about book collecting, so, naturally, I bought a book on the topic. About the only thing of value for a beginner was to “collect what you love.” I was reading a lot of horror and science fiction at the time, so that is where I started. Over the next years, I put together a rather unremarkable collection of books by Ray Bradbury, Piers Anthony, Clive Barker, Anne Rice, and Stephen King.

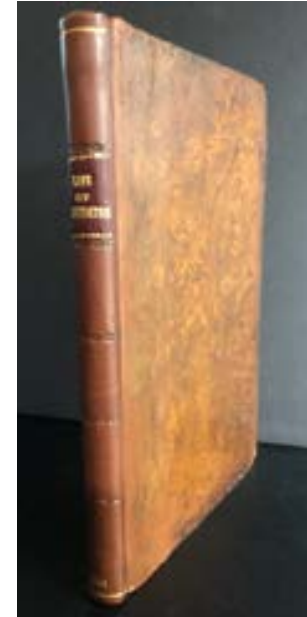
In 2005, I packed up my books and moved from Santa Monica to Washington. The movers put the books in the loft section of my U-Haul making for a terrifying drive over the Siskiyou Mountains. The truck somehow managed to not tip over but I felt like driving a Weeble as it wobbled on every corner!

With my move, I decided to collect books in a more serious way. My new home was four times the size of my tiny apartment, so I finally felt I had the space to create the home library I always wanted. I knew from the start, however, that I did not want to collect horror and science fiction. While the

internet made collecting easier, the kinds of books I had collected in the past were not worth much. Also, my reading interests had changed.

I was reading a lot of American history at the time and was amazed that much of what I learned in school was incomplete, inaccurate, and susceptible to fluid interpretations. This is especially true of the presidents, who may be a hero to one generation and a pariah to the next. The stated goal was to be able to follow the fluid interpretations and assessments of the presidents over time.

I started my collection with a quick search of AbeBooks looking for the oldest full-length, hard bound biography of George Washington I could find.



John Corry's *The Life of George Washington*, 1800

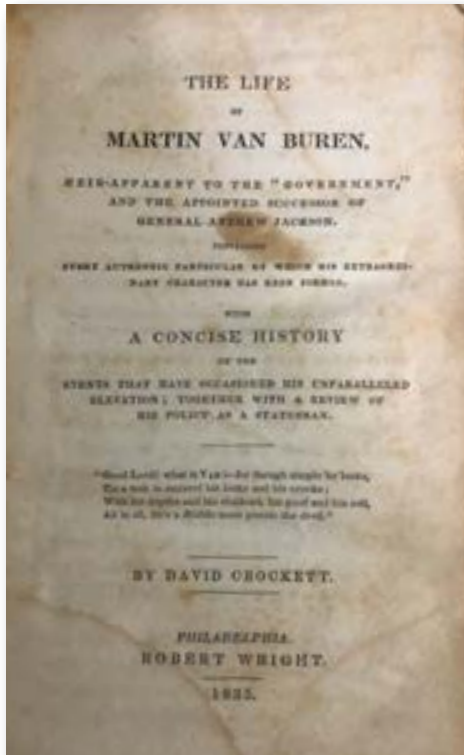
Sorting by year, the first item at the top of the list was John Corry's *The Life of George Washington*. Published in 1800, it is the first English biography of Washington. I didn't know anything about Americana or early biographies at the time, but it seemed to be exactly what I was looking for. It would give me a glimpse into what was said at the time by the British. This was a perspective I hadn't heard anything about, and I was intrigued.

I expected the book would be critical of Washington, paint him as a traitor, and be full of excuses on how the British were defeated. Instead, the biography heaps praise on the Englishman Washington and places blame for the American revolution “in the errors of a few British politicians, and the joint exertions of a number of public spirited men among the colonists who incited their countrymen ...”

Unsurprisingly, he notes that Washington relinquishing the presidency was “one of the most remarkable events recorded in history.” While most of the book is dedicated to the kind of lionization we are accustomed to as Americans, Corry notes “it must be owned, that he was a slaveholder and his exemplary kindness to his dependents cannot reconsider us to the inconsistency in a man who was so strenuous and successful an assertor of liberty.” In other words, the world noted the incongruity of American liberty even in our dawning days.

As if to provide cover for the profuse praise of Washington, Corry dedicates the book to the Right Honourable H.C. Combe, Lord Mayor of London. In a letter preceding the Preface, Corry writes, “When we contemplate the life of the American hero, we behold him, like your Lordship, equally estimable as a benevolent citizen, and a just magistrate.”

In this lavish praise of the Lord Mayor, it seemed the author was saying that to praise Washington was not to diminish his esteem of his “benefactor” and



The Life of Martin Van Buren, by David Crockett

Crockett attacks Van Buren with a ferocity that reminds me of today's politics.

... Martin Van Buren is not the man he is cracked up to be; and that if he is made president of the United States, he will have reached a place to which he is not entitled ...

The information presented in this book:

... will convince every man of their truth, whose mind is not as stupid as a drunken postmaster, as deceitful as an office seeking Congress man, as malicious as an administration printer, and as infamous as a kitchen-cabinet scullion.

When he enters the senate chamber in the morning, he struts and swaggers like a crow in a gutter. He is laced up in corsets, such as women in a town wear, and, if possible, tighter than the best of them. It would be difficult to say, from his personal appearance, whether he was man or woman, but for his large red and gray whiskers.

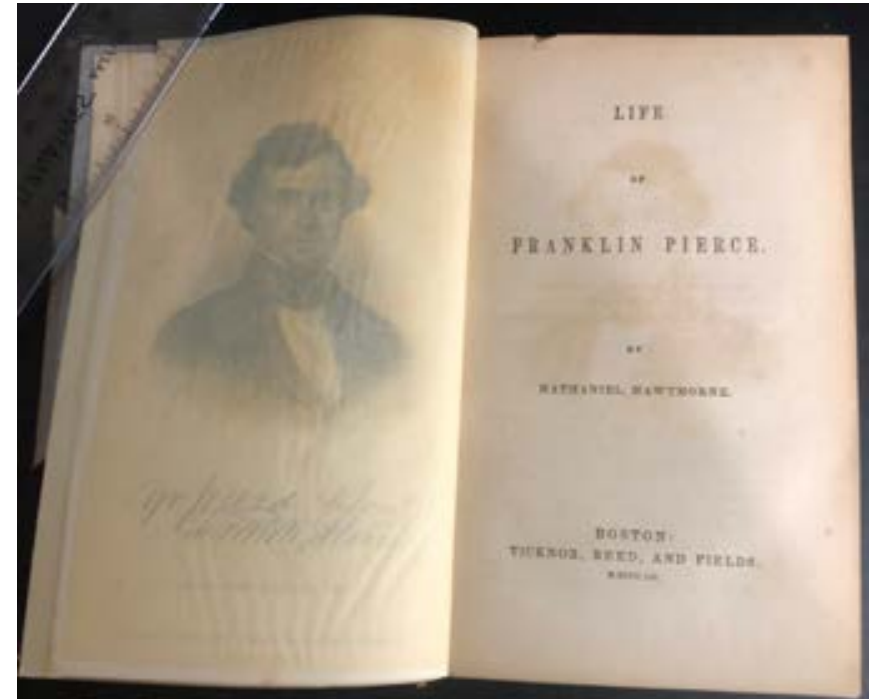
He has scathing criticism of Van Buren on a personal and political level and, even though Crockett was a National Republican at this time, the book is largely written to convince Democrats that Van Buren was not really a Democrat and

criticism of the crown is in the context of quotations and not statements by the author.

What I loved in this biography is how I was surprised and entertained by a story I already knew so well. It confirmed much that I knew while giving me a better understanding of history and making it much more alive for me.

Another book that brought history alive for me was *The Life of Martin Van Buren* by David Crockett. Yes, that David Crockett ... the king of the wild frontier. Known best for being a frontiersman and dying at the Alamo, he was also a highly partisan U.S. Senator and fierce opponent of the Jacksonians and Martin Van Buren in particular.

I expected this to be a typical campaign biography of the time: an annoying, flowery adulation that is more rooted in clichés than actual facts. Instead,



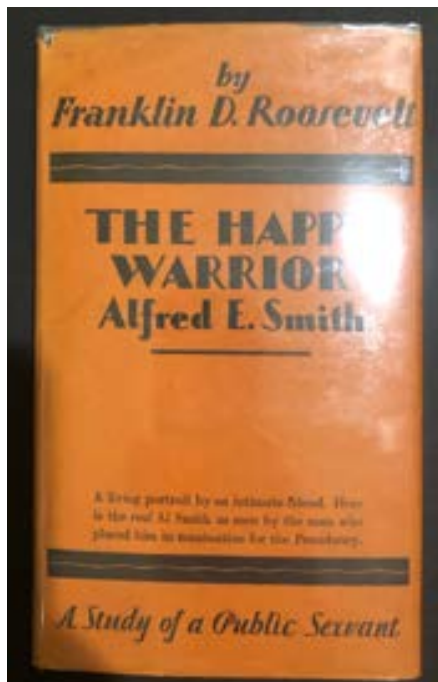
The Life of Franklin Pierce, written by his personal friend, Nathaniel Hawthorne, author of *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of Seven Gables*.

he did not represent the interests of the South. Published in 1835, this could be the first example of a full-length opposition campaign biography. At the time, opposition was typically in the form of articles in partisan newspapers.

The first campaign biography was *The Life of Andrew Jackson* in 1824 for the 1825 election against John Quincy Adams. For each successive election until modern times, candidates would elicit someone to be their official biographer while other biographers copied or plagiarized the original. These biographies developed a specific formula in the way they presented the candidates with such themes as war hero, from humble beginnings, political outsider, and so on. While most were written by journalists, a few notable ones include Nathaniel Hawthorne's biography of his friend Franklin Pierce and Franklin Roosevelt's *The Happy Warrior* to unsuccessfully promote Alfred E. Smith for the Democratic nomination.

Collecting early and significant biographies has been rewarding; however, we are in the midst of a new era in the reinterpreting of history and many historians are achieving rock-star status. Also, I am interested in our modern presidents, so all presidents are fair game for my collection.

I have a significant amount of material about John F. Kennedy. This is not surprising since the amount of Kennedy material seems to be endless including



The Happy Warrior, by Franklin Roosevelt, who supported Alfred E. Smith's unsuccessful efforts to secure the Democratic nomination for President.

an enormous sub-genre about his assassination. Initially, I tried to avoid materials about his assassination; however, the materials seem to find their way to me.

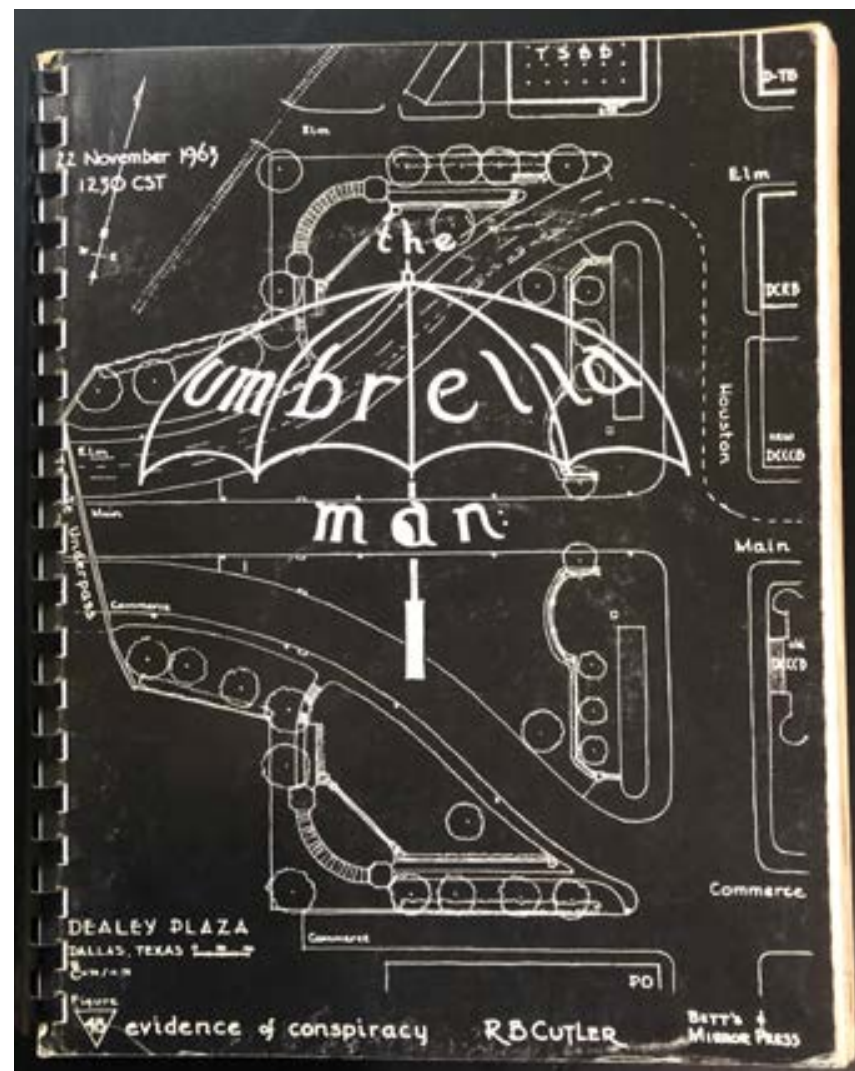
I bought some Kennedy biographies from a guy who posted an ad on Craigslist. It was obvious that it was difficult for him to part with the books and he was visibly upset when he explained that his wife gave him a rather painful ultimatum. In condolence, I explained that I hoped to someday donate all my books to a library interested in presidential history. His eyes lit up and he said, "then you should have these too." He went to the corner of the garage and pulled out a huge box of papers. It did not look like the kinds of materials that I would generally collect but I accepted them because it was important to him.

It turned out the box contained hundreds of items related to the assassination of Kennedy. These are not the mainstream

publications that we have all seen and read. There are journals, self-published books, pamphlets, newsletters, transcripts from conventions, and manuscripts that appear to be vetted by society members. And there are catalogs from book dealers specializing in the trade of Kennedy assassination materials. And while Mr. Larsen thought he was giving me a box of materials about JFK, I think he really gave me a peek into American society that few see or understand.

One of the many problems with this approach is that the need for more space hit me much sooner than I expected, even though it felt like I had unlimited space when I first moved to Washington. To give me more room, I decided to deaccession several books from my library that were not in the presidential theme. Of the signed business books that I cleared out was a copy of *Trump: The Art of the Deal*. I never could have imagined that I should have kept it for my presidential collection!

The presidential election years are typically a bonanza for collectors of presidential biographies. Because of the increased interest in presidents, historians often release new biographies and go on tour to talk about them. I have had the good fortune to attend lectures from many of my heroes, such as David McCullough, Douglas Brinkley, Gary Wills, H.W. Brands, Carl



One of the rare self-published books related to the conspiracies surrounding the Kennedy assassination in this instance focused on "The Umbrella Man", who appeared in images holding an open umbrella after Kennedy was shot as his motorcade drove through Dallas.

Bernstein, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Joseph J. Ellis, and Jon Meacham. I have attended events in Seattle and throughout the country.

In 2007, I went to the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library in Austin to see Robert Dallek at a fundraiser to be attended by Ladybird. In those days, I traveled a fair amount for work and could schedule my travels around my collecting activities. I arrived at the table entrance with a stack of books to get signed under my arm. As it turned out, it was an invite-only event for major donors. I was stunned. I babbled to the woman at the entrance something about being from Seattle, and Robert Dallek was my hero, and their website was unclear, and [I am trying really hard not to cry], and ... she called the librarian who listened patiently to my second round of babbling. Taking pity on me, she agreed to let me into the event if I promised not to approach the former First Lady or Professor Dallek. Naturally, I agreed and enjoyed the lecture, even if my books went home with me unsigned. I eventually corresponded with Professor Dallek and he signed them for me.

I've had the pleasure of meeting and corresponding with many historians over the years. One of my favorites is H.W. Brands. His lectures are insightful and he is a captivating and entertaining storyteller. In one of his lectures, he advised readers to never read past the foreword or the introduction. "Read the foreword and throw the rest away," he said. His reasoning is that historians always tell you the main point in the foreword and there is no point to the rest. He pointed out that he was the only historian smart enough to never include a foreword. On other occasions, he shared how he selects topics for his books, why historians don't write about Chester Arthur, and why so many do write about Kennedy. From many historians, I learned that writing a biography is hard, thankless work.

I once wrote to Paul F. Boller to ask him about the personal libraries of presidents. I had seen a book from U.S. Grant's library (that I regrettably did not buy) and it sparked a curiosity. Boller wrote many topical books about presidents, like their hobbies, pets, campaigns, and wives. He didn't know of specific books on the topic but encouraged me to write such a book. He always referred to me as "the young man" even though I was in my mid-forties. He was in his nineties, so I guess it was excusable.

While books inscribed to me are nice, the books inscribed from one historian to another, or books used by historians in their work are the most prized in my collection. Recently, I was able to acquire books from the library of David Herbert Donald. Donald is my favorite Lincoln biographer and most modern biographers are basically just rewriting what he already wrote. I had written to him and he agreed to sign my books. I sent them to him and heard nothing for several months. Eventually, the books were returned with a handwritten note apologizing for the delay and explaining that he was very sick. I wrote him a note of appreciation and wished him well. I did not hear back from him but saw that he died a few months later.

One of the things I learned about Donald through his personal books that are now in my collection is that David Herbert Donald seems to have had a

Letter from Paul Boller to the author, dated June 15, 2009

An inscribed copy of *Lincoln*, by David Herbert Donald, with a personal note from the author.

relationship with his books as objects. The books that I have seen used by other historians have been tattered and heavily marked, while Donald's books were very gently read. The books clearly had been used for research because they had markings and notes; however, the markings were all in light pencil that could be easily erased. Rather than bent corners and underlines, the back of the books contained page numbers and the referenced pages only minor markings. I wish I had been able to learn more about Donald from him directly; however, I am happy to have a small part of his legacy and his work in my collection.

★★★

Tim Schmidt is a longtime Book Club of Washington member, former board member, and current webmaster. In addition to presidential biography and American history, he is also interested in John Steinbeck, Ernest Hemingway, mountaineering, and books about books. He is also enjoys carving Native American art.

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